FRANZ LISZT

The Man of Love

Guy de Pourtalès

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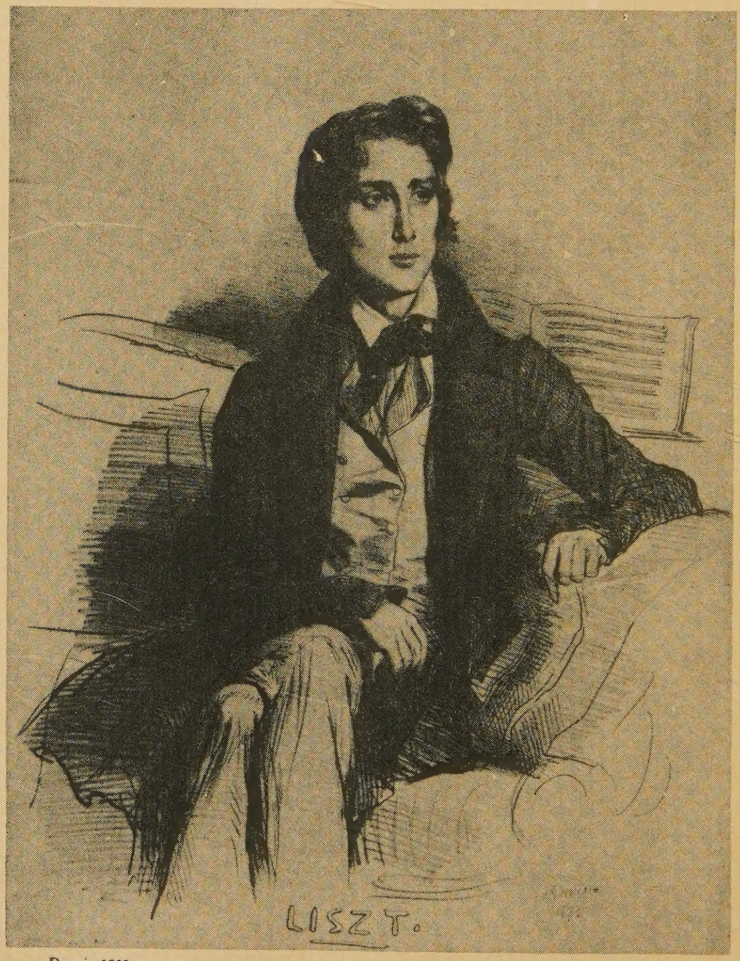

Deveria 1832

FRANZ LISZT

FRANZ LISZT:
THE MAN OF LOVE

By

GUY DE POURTALÈS

Translated from the French by
ELEANOR STIMSON BROOKS

"Great music is the handwriting of the complete man."—PAUL VALÉRY

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DEDICATION

THERE is very little uniformity in man. That which, of all things, changes the least is, perhaps, the heart, ever the same, to-day as in the time of Homer or of Shakespeare. But what element of immutability is there in the regions which centre round it and through which the intelligence must pierce before reaching it? By these I mean the tastes, the customs, the fashions and the education by which our senses are so strongly swayed.

Such were my thoughts as yesterday I watched the ephemeral population of Bayreuth on its way to the Wagnerian arena. I meditated too Madame de Sévigné's fling at Racine: "He will go out of fashion, like coffee." It is certain, though, that the craze for coffee will survive all poetics, for an art bears its end within itself, as does all life its death, and all pleasure its inevitable reaction.

While the cars dashed up the sacred hill, my curiosity was on the point of failing before so vaunted a love. Yet there is a lesson too in the spectacle of the spectator at Bayreuth. It made me a good spectator of myself, leading me, for the first time, to consider in Wagner no longer the musician alone, but the man. Would not Wagner the poet be as interesting as Wagner the composer? A capital error of Saint-Saëns and of his disciples in musical criticism has been to underestimate the precise importance of the Wagnerian religion. It is this no doubt that will make Wagnerism endure, even if one day dusk should fall over the skilfully contrived splendour of the Tetralogy. Richard Wagner's Schopenhauerism,

born of his dolorous human experience and nourished by his ideals, is far from being a dried-up source. All these adepts, streaming with *leitmotifs*, run little risk of disgust, for their thirst can be slaked only by the blood drawn by their master from his own wounds. How could so much nostalgia, orchestrated for their benefit, fail to penetrate, not only the emotions but the souls, however unsophisticated, of these infants, through their auditive apparatus? It is a little more than mere pleasure and decoration. It is one's self that is exalted. And what proves to me that a religion is not the most complete possible exaltation of the Ego, even, and above all, if I abandon myself to the point of destruction? In God, yes. Therefore, in love.

At Bayreuth, all is love. Towns with such heredity are rare. Assisi, Florence, Toledo, Avila were all built by saints or artists or impassioned women. Even to those who know them only through books, theirs are inspiring stones. Bayreuth, a complete imitation of Versailles, in the time of the Margraves and "rococo-baroque"—as befits a German town which had its own eighteenth century—is chronologically the last of these Meccas. It would be as dead as Aix or Bruges had not three acolytes of the Holy Grail of poetry come there one day—Liszt, Wagner, and Cosima.

The choice was preceded by no portent, but was decided by the sole will of the "joyless, peaceless man," as Mathilde Wesendonck called him. He said: "Here shall my imagination set up its abode." In this solitude he was to live for twelve years and see the crusade of his ideal set forth. He died in a Venetian palace, bequeathing to his country something more than the memory of

a great man. This Wotan had known himself even beyond his ego, even as far as us, farther even than us. Remember the Traveller in the Tetralogy who pays for the ring he stole from the fiends by the knowledge of his own ruin. "I have felt the pulse of modern art," wrote Wagner to Liszt, "and I know it will die. But far from saddening me, this fills me with joy, because I know also that it is not art that will perish, only our own art." It is by such views that Wagner goes beyond Wagnerism, that the man surpasses the musician.

They were, then, three. And the youngest was a woman, the wife of the Master. When he died, it was thought she would die, too. That was forty-two years ago, and to-day her heart is still the vital heart of Bayreuth. One must have pondered upon the efforts represented by the cycle of performances at Bayreuth to realize the powerful influence of an energy like hers. In this life of a great leader, romance died February 13, 1883, in the pestilential air of Venice; since then, there survived only the will to carry on the mission confided to her. Yet it is pleasant to know that last year, during a violent storm, this old lady of eighty-seven said to her companion: "Tell me, do you think the weather is fine in Italy?" Even in rainy Bavaria, the daughter of Liszt, born at Lake Como, has kept the memory of her mornings in Rome.

Granted the rare honour of seeing her, I was struck by her resemblance to her father. The lion, grown old, had, no doubt, this same indulgent majesty, these tender hands, this old-fashioned courtly French that gave our meeting a certain additional sonority. It all endowed the house—"Wahnfried"—so typically German and "Louis II," with something singular. Here we have

a famous example of the fusion of the two geniuses separated by the Rhine. Through Marie d'Agoult, the mother of Liszt's two daughters, the descendants of Wagner have their share of French blood. And every one in Bayreuth knows the task incumbent upon the four surviving children of Madame Cosima. They have the faith and the tenacity which mark the robust families of the Renaissance as well as a sense, Latin in its intensity, of quality in effort.

When Madame Wagner is questioned concerning her mother, she immediately becomes once more the Parisienne who handed tea to Lamartine and Sainte-Beuve in the *salon* of Daniel Stern. And, with the infallible memory of the old regarding their childhood, she can tell you the name of her confessor, who played a part in '48. But it is, above all, of Liszt that she talks, of that beautiful youth, already legendary at twenty, who turned the heads of all the women of Europe, earned a fortune at every concert, and, at his death, left seven pocket-handkerchiefs. This man has fed his century with anecdotes and invented an exaltation still potent for the older generations. He was, as his daughter says, "an admirable example of generosity." The glory of Wagner is his creation, continued by his family. For this fertile genius, who composed more than fifteen hundred works and ploughed through every possible path of song, voluntarily withdrew behind one whom he judged greater than himself. Bayreuth, where he died during a performance of *Tristan*, is, thanks to him, a home of the ideal.

Has this ideal served its time? This was the question I asked myself as I watched Walhalla fall in ruins. It may be that I have stated it badly, expecting from music

alone an answer that, in the last analysis, comes always from the soul. And *Parsifal* gives it better than does the *Ring*. There Liszt the Catholic and Wagner the Protestant were merged in that ecstasy of mysticism which affords common ground to all still in need of a faith.

That is the lesson Bayreuth taught me. It is also the lesson offered by the life of Liszt to one following the play of the sentiments between the lines of the story. Despite our scepticism, and our selfishness, we are still charmed by every harmony a little touched with passion, we are still inconsolable when we fear love has left us. A certain romanticism of the heart invariably constitutes the most refined intellectual order. Now Liszt had many loves, but the order which dominates his works, as it governed his life, was pursuit of an ideal. No matter if this word provokes a smile. When Princess Wittgenstein, old and ugly as an owl, reproaching him with his elderly love adventures, said, " They will spoil your biography," Liszt must have smiled, too. But a truce to jealousy and enmity. Madame Cosima offered an example when she repeated to me several times : " Do not be unjust to the Princess." Yet, God knows, she did not love the woman who worked so long to separate Liszt from Wagner. But in the world of the mind there are no separations.

So it is to you, cynical, tired soul, that I dedicate this book ; for you, in spite of yourself, keep a taste for generous natures ; you prefer folly to mediocrity, and you know that the music which springs from the heart is the only music of which the intelligence never tires.

BAYREUTH,

August, 1925.

THE LIFE OF LISZT

I

Under the Sign of the Comet

I cannot conceive of the spirit of music as residing anywhere but in love.—Wagner.

ADAM LISZT and his young wife, Anna Lager, had no sooner finished moving into their new house at Raiding than they began to find time heavy on their hands.

The new steward, who was the sole townsman among the peasant huts of this remote village, found nothing that appealed to him in the ugly building that was to serve as his quarters on Prince Esterhazy's estate. The memory of Eisenstadt, where he had spent so many delightful years, filled him with home-sickness. Eisenstadt lay several hours distant from Raiding, and although both were situated in the district of Œdenburg, the little town, across the Hungarian plains, seemed as far away as happiness. It was not that Adam Liszt was naturally gloomy, but he loved the life of society and music. Nothing delighted him more than his master's beautiful assemblies when that magnate's court was glorified by the presence of the illustrious Haydn and the famous Hummel, Mozart's favourite pupil. He almost regretted that he had shown himself so reliable an agent, since these very qualities had brought him the present detested promotion. But like the good Christian and faithful employee that he was, Adam Liszt resigned himself to his duties.

His young wife accepted this new solitude with a

better grace. In the evening she obliged him to sit down at the piano or play on the guitar and did her best to console him for a life which he often referred to as a failure, for he believed himself born for the career of a virtuoso. Haydn himself agreed with him in this. But it was now too late to go back; and, abandoning the keyboard with some bitterness, Adam Liszt set himself to the study of his master's rents.

One day, in the early spring of 1811, while the young couple were strolling about the garden, Anna confided to her husband that she believed she was going to have a child. They decided that it was to be a boy, and that he should travel the glorious but difficult road of which his father continued to dream so vainly. As the day of her confinement approached, Mme. Liszt seldom left her room, and in the evening the steward would read the newspapers aloud to her. Towards the middle of October they were much interested in the comet that was visible every night in the sky. It seemed a good omen. If only the child might be born while it still shone! During the night of the 21st to 22nd, in the very nick of time, the expected son made his entry into the world.

He received the name of Franz. He was so puny that at first he was not expected to live, and during his first years his parents had to wage an unremitting battle for his life. Fever and a nervous ailment alternately ravaged his feeble body and brought on fainting fits. Once, returning from a tour of inspection, the father found his wife crushed with grief by the bedside of the dead child. The village carpenter took his measurements and prepared the coffin. But little Franz came back to life in spite of the doctor. These troubles lasted until his sixth year, when his health became established.

Meanwhile, life in Raiding had lost none of its severity, and, except in vacations when they flew to Eisenstadt, the Liszts lived like pariahs on their spot of earth. A few rare visits from friends, the books from a library chosen by chance, which the prince had placed at the disposal of his steward, the piano and the guitar were the only distractions.

One Sunday, when the elder Liszt had sat down at the piano to play Ries's *Concerto in C-sharp-minor*, little Franz, who at the time was six years old, stole in beside him. With his head bent attentively, his lips half open, the child listened to the voices that rose from the ebony box where, one by one, or all together, they were born into life. He sat without stirring, so marvellous did their language seem to him. When his father had brought this extraordinary conversation to an end, lighted his pipe and taken up again his eternal papers, the child ran out into the garden so as to retain as long as possible what these invisible friends had said to him. It became a game for him to recover their whispers, and that very evening, at table, he sang them through without a mistake. M. and Mme. Liszt were struck dumb with astonishment, and this increased when Franz announced that he wished to learn music without losing a day. The steward gazed long at his son, at first with a little envy, then with growing pride. He had a sudden intuition that he would realize, after all, the old dream that for him had been frustrated by circumstances; and, taking the child in his arms, he placed him once more beside him at the piano. Then he played over again the final movement of the Concerto.

"When you grow up," he asked, "what would you like to be?"

"That man there," said the child, pointing to a lithograph of Beethoven that hung on the wall.

Adam Liszt was enough of a poet to believe in prophetic visions. The very next day he gave his son his first lesson, and after the tenth day there no longer remained the shadow of a doubt in his mind: this boy was going to repeat the career of Mozart. There was no getting him away from the piano. He spent hours over his scales, understood everything instantly, and transposed from one key to another without the least hesitation. His ear was miraculously accurate, and his small hand, with its flexible fingers, seemed suited in advance to the difficulties of execution. Even more surprising was his memory, which retained everything without effort. In order to test him, M. Liszt would now play for long hours before his son, and the latter, taking his place at the piano, would afterwards render in his own fashion, and as well as his childish fingers could, the most varied pieces. They had expected a gifted child: they had found a prodigy. But the enthusiastic father never noticed that the eyes of the overworked boy were growing hollow and his features drawn. Three months of this regimen brought him for a second time to the verge of death.

It became necessary to stop all this music and turn him out to pasture. Franz would not consent to lie down unless his mother replaced the forbidden delight by reading aloud to him. She read him Grimm's Fairy Tales, but the pleasure they gave him at first did not last long. He soon came to prefer history and the lives of the saints, and he delighted in heroic tales. The priest of Raiding, who was deeply interested in the child,

came out two or three times a week to instruct him in writing and arithmetic; and these lessons, like those given by his mother, always ended in stories: the story of the Bible, the Life and Passion of our Lord, tales drawn from the Fathers of the Church. Franz asked searching questions and showed a tendency to mystical exaltation which his parents, careful as they were in their spiritual duties, rather tried to discourage. Often they heard him talking in his sleep and groaning, or his mother would find him at prayer, his face glistening with tears.

When this crisis was safely over, and the child's health improved and he grew taller, he was allowed to resume, with moderation, the beloved lessons. At once he was seized with a rage for improvising. Like many children, he first sought for a theme, then added variations and transposed it into several keys. One day in his office, the elder Liszt heard some modulations so well arranged, so fresh in expression, that he became curious to know what score his son was playing. He pushed the door open a crack and saw him seated at the keyboard without any music at all. The strangest part was that he did not stop with easy effects or repetition, but, going straight ahead, he was already perfecting his arrangements of phrases and themes and binding them together. The priest, the postmaster, a few neighbours who had heard what was going on, sometimes dropped in of an evening to drink a glass of beer and listen to the young prodigy.

Raiding, that little oasis in the midst of the Hungarian plain, was not on the line of travel. The only strangers who ever stopped there were the inspector of the prince's estates or some troop of gipsies. Now and then, especi-

ally in the summer-time, the village would be filled with a hubbub of bells and songs, and a whole tribe of these wandering poets would set up their tents and draw up their carts on the square. The tattered and magnificent Romanies encamped in all their splendour. One by one, the women came out of their wagons leading clusters of children, and the camp settled down in a few moments in the presence of a gallery of curious lookers-on. An old man would make an announcement in his mixed Hungarian jargon; the peasants would bring their ploughshares and their notched scythes to be repaired and lead in to the gipsies the horses that had lost their shoes. Till evening the time passed in these commonplace tasks. Then the camp really came to life. They lighted their torches and built a great bonfire into which every one flung a stick, and the gipsy women drew from their boxes glittering scarfs, golden rings and ear-rings, necklaces of amber and coral. The men snatched up their violins and cymbals.

Then out of the silence would arise a slow, monotonous melody. The old women would appear, a dozen of them, raising their witch-like arms and pointing prophetic fingers to heaven. They glided backward and forward, came and went, following the music. In cracked voices they chanted: "Enjoy your passions, gratify your desires. See with what little glory dies the dry old tree. Do not fall in love, poor heart, or you will be drenched with bitterness. Love your life, shut your eyes, roll on the moss. Dance and drink."

When the old women had ceased, a young woman stepped forward and uttered a long, strident cry. Then violins and cymbals crashed together while she sang:

" In the evening the pretty girl comes home with her geese,
The black-eyed girl with the round cheeks.
She sings, ' Tega, tega, tega . . .
Don't seek me, you whom I do not love,
You do not please my heart.
What do I care for silken tents ?
I can find heaven with my well-beloved under his ragged tent.
Tega, tega . . .
With him I have love enough to last for ever.
But the heart sickens to tears at gold brocade.
Tega, tega . . .' "

Then one of the old women stepped out towards the audience to tell fortunes. The tense, passionate fingers of the fortune-teller grasped the hard hands of the men and the delicate palms of the girls. " You are going to be unhappy, for you are fool enough to believe in love. For you there is a large fortune waiting. And you—let me see—you are going to have five children who will bring you many cares. . . ."

The gipsies went on with their sinuous dances, their elastic leaps, chanting a shrill song in which the tonic, third and dominant united in an unbroken harmony of sorrow.

In the front row, little Liszt listened to the marvellous message of the wandering virtuosi.

II

The Idea of the Impossible

THE steward of Raiding was returning with a sort of exaltation to his former dreams. His barouche was threading the road to Œdenburg and to Eisenstadt, where, accompanied by his son, he was going to visit some of his friends. After the greetings were over, they placed Franz at the piano. What a joy to see their surprise, their enthusiasm! What a compensation for these wasted and scattered years! The Kleins and the Zirkels could not get over their astonishment. The Lagers shook their heads, full of reserve and anxieties, for where was all this going to lead this young monster with his attractive face? Edward, M. Liszt's younger brother, was the most delighted of all; he embraced the child with rapture. As for Baron von Braun, a blind, clever dilettante, he begged M. Liszt to allow the child to appear at a concert he would give for his benefit that autumn at Œdenburg. M. Liszt was quite willing, and they set to work at once to arrange a programme. The Concerto of Ries, in E-flat, for piano and orchestra, seemed the most appropriate. If it was necessary, he could add here and there a little fresh improvisation.

They set off on the eve of the great day. But if the father was nervous, Franz himself felt not the least anxiety. As the carriage rolled across the plain where the late grass was dying, he was reading in his corner, completely absorbed in a recent work of the great Goethe which he had carried off from the library. It was the *Elective Affinities*; and while, for the twentieth time, the

father and mother calculated the chances of success, Franz was doing his best to understand it. "The arts are the surest means of escaping from the world; they are also the surest means of uniting ourselves to it. Art is concerned with what is difficult and good. In seeing what is difficult performed with ease, we begin to think of the impossible." A dark saying, but full of promise.

On the day of the concert he had an attack of fever. The room was crowded. When his turn arrived, the little boy mounted the platform, bowed as he had been taught, and sat down at the piano. From the very first bars it was evident that the mite was already a master. His success was prodigious, and so great was the applause that he repeated his improvisations on well-known themes. At the end of the performance, every one wished to see him and speak to him, and M. Liszt seized the opportunity to organize on the spot a second concert at which Franz, this time, should be the only performer. The enthusiasm was increasing to such a point that the father had only one thought, to have his son play before Prince Esterhazy. The fame of these triumphs spread abroad, and the magnate, wishing to show his sympathy with his faithful functionary, placed at his disposal the drawing-rooms of his palace at Presbourg.

It was on the 26th of November that the great event took place. It must be so described because, while the first two soirées were fortunate ventures, this evening was to determine the boy's future. All the aristocracy of Presbourg were gathered together for the performance; and Franz played his beloved Beethoven, improvised, and rendered without effort and in the desired rhythm the bravura passages which several great noblemen placed under his eyes. There was general astonishment. When

it was learned that the father did not possess the means to give his son a complete musical education, the purses flew open. Counts Apponyi, Amadee, Esterhazy, Szapary and Viczay instantly settled upon him, for a period of six years, an income of six hundred Austrian florins.

They all went back to Raiding. But in this brief time everything had changed. The obscure little family that had set out a fortnight before returned almost famous. M. Liszt spoke of asking the Prince for a long vacation, spoke even of perhaps bidding a definite farewell to the village and settling in Vienna. The astonished priest, full of misgivings, shook his head and tried to recall his friends to reason. Mme. Liszt, whose dearest memories were now bound to the humble village, felt her tears gathering. But the steward was living in the exaltation of his recovered youth and would allow nothing to mar his happiness. As for Franz, he recalled that phrase of Goethe's from which the mist had suddenly lifted: "In seeing what is difficult performed with ease, we begin to think of the impossible."

So the Liszts established themselves in Vienna towards the close of this year, 1820. Their first visit was to the illustrious composer and pianist Charles Czerny in order to obtain lessons. M. Liszt was expecting his son to sit down at the piano and play Ries's Concerto; but Franz, who had found at last a master who shared his worship of Beethoven, attacked the *Sonata in A-flat*. Czerny's surprise was as profound as the paternal vanity could have desired, but, as he was a cautious man, he did not exclaim or use any such expressions as genius or prodigy. When the boy had finished, however, he said solemnly: "You may become a greater pianist than any of us." The father then described to him the

concert at Presbourg and Czerny offered to give him lessons at the moderate price of a gulden an hour. At the twelfth lesson, as M. Liszt was taking out his gold-piece, the professor cried: "No, no, the child's progress in so short a time has generously repaid my trouble."

Every evening Franz went to see his master, who found it a joy to make Putzi (as he called him) practise, and often the lessons lasted for two or three hours. But things did not always go well. Able as he was to read anything at sight, Putzi grew impatient over the minutiæ that were his master's passion. But Czerny was an admirable monitor and showed himself inflexible; nothing that concerned execution was detail for him. Sometimes, weary of a passage that he had to begin again for the twentieth time, Putzi wept and stamped. But Czerny went tranquilly to the window, lighted his long pipe, and came back, and his finger once again pointed out the detested measures on the score. No need to teach Franz to be an artist—a thing that cannot be taught; it was Czerny's humbler duty to shape that prodigious little hand to the impossible. It was for the sake of the soul that Czerny was implacable.

In addition to Czerny, the child needed a master of composition and harmony. They chose Antonio Salieri, the last teacher of Beethoven. This nervous and enthusiastic old Italian taught him to read instrumental music and operatic scores, and trained him in those variations on a given theme for which he had already showed so brilliant an aptitude. After a few months he was so far advanced that one of his arabesques was included in an album that an editor was devoting to Diabelli's waltz.

For a year and a half little Franz worked unremittingly under the direction of his masters and his father.

Then the time seemed to have arrived for him to appear before the public of the capital. A first concert took place in December, 1822, at which Franz played Hummel's *Concerto in A-minor* and a fantasia of his own on the andante movement in Beethoven's *Symphony in C-minor*. So great was his success that the next morning a critic exclaimed in his paper, "Est deus in nobis." But the boy paid scant attention to his success. He was consumed with one desire, to know Beethoven. He recalled the stormy face hung above the piano in the *salon* at Raiding. He thought of the famous rehearsal of *Fidelio* at which, a few weeks before, the great deaf composer had fought with the orchestra before giving up the struggle and then fled on the arm of his friend Schindler. "That is the only man," he said to himself, "by whom I wish to be heard." They knew Schindler, the intimate friend of the master, and he promised to take the two Liszts to see Beethoven, so that they might invite him to Franz's next concert.

Vienna at this time had gone mad over Italian music. Rossini had captured the town, the theatres and the court, and nothing was played anywhere but the *Vestal* and the *Barber*. Beethoven was neglected and forgotten. Poor, exiled by his deafness, more and more morose, he was meditating in his poverty-stricken home on the *Ninth Symphony*.

When Schindler appeared, followed by little Liszt, the solitary old monarch did not receive them cordially. Everything he had read in the papers about the child-prodigy had been at once suspect to the man who was irritated by the mere words "brilliant" and "virtuoso." He would not allow Franz to play for him and refused to promise to be present at the concert. So what a

surprise it was for the Liszts, when on the evening of the 13th of April, among the four thousand auditors of the Redoutensaal, Beethoven made his entrance. Franz, trembling for the first time, looked at the master, seated not far away, whose motionless eyes were fixed upon him. He attacked Hummel's *Concerto*, then a fantasia of his own composition. Hardly had he finished, amid the enthusiastic shouts of the Viennese, when Beethoven hurried to the stage, grasped the child and kissed him on the forehead.

This consecration was dearer to him that the hymns to his growing glory sung the next day in the newspapers. But the prodigious success of this concert had still other results. In fact, the receipts had been large enough for Adam Liszt to think of leaving Vienna. The Paris Conservatory alone could now furnish the final technical instruction of his child. Both father and son were thinking of only one thing, creation. Virtuosity no longer seemed to them anything but the first stage on the road of the masters.

III

"I DREAD WOMEN ON YOUR ACCOUNT"

ON December 11th of this year, 1823, they arrived in Paris. The very next day Franz and his father made their way to the Conservatory of Music which was directed by Cherubini. "Here," said the child, "is the seat of the mysterious tribunal that consecrates or condemns"; it would not have taken much to make him fall on his knees. Rarely have two human beings felt more ill at ease than the Liszts, when the door-keeper ushered them into the director's office. As if he were in the presence of some powerful Hungarian noble, Franz was on the point of hastening to the all-powerful hand and kissing it. But an icy glance stopped him short. When he had heard their request, one dry phrase fell from the lips of Cherubini, "The regulations." The regulations forbade any foreigner to enter the sacred precincts. The Liszts looked at each other overwhelmed. Franz began to sob. His father begged and argued, and held out a letter from Prince Metternich. "Impossible," repeated the Italian, "you are not French." It became clear that they must give up all hope and that the long journey had been undertaken in vain.

They would get along, then, without the official stamp and henceforth trust to genius alone. Fortunately, M. Liszt had provided himself with introductions. Several *salons* opened to them. When he had been in Paris only a few weeks, Franz played in the house of the Duchess de Berry, then before the Duc d'Orleans, and "little Liszt" enjoyed even more incredible triumphs than in

Vienna. Fortune smiled on them: two thousand francs from a private concert; even more when the Crown Prince graciously loaned them the Italian opera-house where Pasta, Stendhal's friend, took part in their concert. Every day there was some fashionable assembly at which Franz had to play his own little compositions, improvise, do a thousand things at the piano, and the child found some means of keeping himself continually fresh. Among the many new friends, he was especially attached to the Erard family and the composer Ferdinand Paer, a former leader of the imperial orchestra, who taught him French. The child learned with ease, thanks to a very retentive memory, so well, in fact, that in the spring of 1824 Paer took it into his head to have him write the music for a light opera. He sketched the libretto himself in collaboration with the mediocre poet, Théaulon, and M. de Rancé. It was to be called *Don Sancho, or the Castle of Love.* This was the sort of thing they proposed to a child under thirteen who was learning about life in the drawing-rooms, growing like an asparagus-stalk and playing with a *polichinelle* which the future Louis-Philippe had given him.

M. Erard had an important branch of his piano-factory in London. Having to go there himself in May, he suggested taking the Liszts with him. Mme. Liszt, who was fatigued by this continual travelling, decided to return to her sister at Gratz and await there the end of this trip, which was to close with a visit to the principal cities of the French provinces. It was a painful separation, the first sorrow that really touched Franz's heart. But already he belonged very little to himself. This is why one moment of the day became particularly dear to him, the moment at which, every morning, he went

to mass. A happy withdrawal, shut away amid the soft, sweet notes of the organ, a little oasis of tenderness.

London gave the child the same reception as Paris, and King George IV, the old friend of Brummel, summoned him to Windsor. "I have never heard anything to equal it," he said, caressing the child's curls, "not only in perfection of playing, but in richness of ideas. This boy surpasses Cramer and Moscheles." And the fat, ageing king had the air of knowing whereof he spoke. As for Franz, he was now dreaming of nothing but his opera, and he sang for the great ladies of this court of another age the childish recitatives of his *Castle of Love*. During the summer they returned to Paris to work on *Don Sancho*, which by the middle of the next winter was two-thirds finished. Tours through the provinces interrupted it again. At last the final organ-point had been placed and they were preparing to leave for the country when, in July of this year, 1825, Adam Liszt found on the trunk that he had already locked a communication from the Minister of Fine Arts. It stipulated that *Don Sancho* should be submitted to the jury in eight days. In spite of this haste, everything was ready on time and the piece was received with congratulations.

"Putzi," wrote M. Liszt to Czerny, "Putzi has only one passion, for composing. His sonata for four hands, his trio, his quintette, should please you. Every day he spends two hours in exercises, one hour in reading at sight, and all the rest of his time is consecrated to composition. He has grown almost as tall as I am."

On October 17th, *Don Sancho* was presented for the first time at the Royal Academy of Music, that is to say, at the Grand Opera. The hall was crowded and the friends, connoisseurs and patrons promised a masterpiece. From

behind the scenes, the amazed Franz watched the transparent walls of the "Castle" and its youthful occupants, while Mlle. Grassari and Adolphe Nourrit, the two principal soloists, came and went a little nervously. The curtain rose on a chorus of peasants; Don Sancho appeared and sang his love for Elzire, his doubts, his jealousy. . . .

The piece was a disappointment. It did not occur to anyone, until too late, that a child of fourteen could not illustrate very sincerely the passionate nonsense of a pastoral by Florian. It was, however, a *succès d'estime* for the "little budding Mozart," who was the first to realize that his abilities had been abused. As a counterstroke, he published early in 1826 his *Studies in Twelve Exercises*, a mine of new ideas, strong and flowing under their classical form, and a work that was to bring him wealth for many years. At the same time his father took him to see Antoine Reicha, his fellow-countryman, a professor at the Conservatory, who gave him his final lessons in counterpoint.

But in spite of his industry and the new development of his talent, in spite of the pecuniary success of a tour in the provinces and in Switzerland, Franz's mood became more and more sombre. A great nervous exhaustion followed this overwork and, along with it, an imperative need of solitude. Of reading also. He had just finished the *Odes* of Victor Hugo and the *Trappiste* of Vigny. It was his firm belief that an artist has a mission to fulfil, but did not his own experience prove that the virtuoso is primarily only a public entertainer? He who had seen Beethoven shut away in his deafness and poverty was quite aware that the crowd did not come to his concerts, where he appeared as the child-prodigy, to find either thought or art, but merely to stimulate their nerves.

The idea of the performing dog became insupportable to him. But among the artists themselves was there not often a lack of faith? Even of sincerity?

One experiment he made troubled him a great deal. While he was speaking of Beethoven with a number of musicians, one of them, a well-known violinist who said he was a great admirer of the master, brought up the subject of one of the Sonatas. Franz sat down at the piano, as if he were going to play it, but instead played one of his own works. The artist was completely deceived and was lost in admiration. This experience filled Liszt's heart with bitter astonishment. And then he heard every day, on all sides, anecdotes of the most flagrant commercialism. Now the growing boy felt for his art a religious devotion. Nowhere but in the church could he find an exaltation comparable to what it gave him. And he could only prolong this state of grace, in which he bathed his growing soul, by reading the *Imitation* and the *Fathers of the Desert*. At these times his mystical impulses became so strong that one day, in the midst of doubt and indecision, an entirely new ideal budded in his mind, the thought of taking orders. He opened his heart to his father. Never, in all the six years since he had embarked with his son on their marvellous adventure, had M. Liszt been so thunderstruck. "You belong to Art, not to the Church," he answered, and this logical man removed every religious book from Franz's room. But the latter bought them again secretly and read them at night. A new state of exhaustion, increased by ascetic exercises.

Morning and evening Franz went to church; he remained long on his knees and fasted several times a week. He even had hallucinations in which he saw his patron saint, Francis de Paul, standing on the ocean waves,

his outspread mantle at his feet, holding in one hand a burning coal, the other raised to exorcise the storm or to bless the sailors in distress, while his eyes turned towards heaven where in a glory shone the word, *Charitas*. One afternoon he lost consciousness, and his father found him lying crumpled on the drawing-room floor beside the piano. This time the doctor interposed decisively and, as summer with its enervating heat had begun, it was decided that he should go to Boulogne-sur-Mer for a complete rest.

Franz's health at once improved ; his colour and gaiety returned. On the other hand, M. Liszt fell seriously ill of gastric fever, and after a very few days his life was despaired of. The young lad, at his wits' end, notified his friends, the Erards, and then spent every moment at the bedside of the dying man. He reproached himself bitterly. It seemed to him that lately his inner life had separated him from the one to whom he owed everything. Was it possible that religion separated you from those you loved best? In a moment of respite from his sufferings, Adam Liszt spoke of his wife, his fatherland. Then he said to his son, " My child, I am going to leave you very much alone, but your talent will protect you against every misfortune. You have a good heart and no lack of intelligence. Nevertheless, I dread women on your account ; they will trouble and dominate your life." With these words M. Liszt died. It was the 28th of August, 1827. He was buried at Boulogne.

On his return to Paris, where he went to await his mother, Franz set out to see his confessor. He told him of his father's last words and asked to have the sixth and ninth commandments explained to him. This tall, slender lad of sixteen was afraid that he might have transgressed them unawares.

IV

Caroline de Saint-Cricq

MME. LISZT arrived in September. In order that he might not have to draw upon the small sum which he had saved, Franz sold his concert-piano at a loss. He furnished in a very simple way an apartment at 7-bis rue Montholon, and set to work giving lessons. So great was his reputation that he found his time taken from half-past eight in the morning to ten at night.

One day he was summoned to the mansion of the Count de Saint-Cricq, Minister of Commerce and Manufactures in the Martignac cabinet. Mme. de Saint-Cricq, who was an invalid, received him stretched out in her chaise-longue, and began to talk to him about her daughter's musical education which she proposed to confide to him. Caroline entered. She was a slender brunette of seventeen with wistful, violet eyes. These two artless children looked at each other with interest.

For the first lesson, Franz arrived curled and prinked like a dandy in his close-fitting, blue frock-coat, with his large Byronic collar, floating tie and buff-coloured waistcoat of Kerseymere cloth. Caroline listened pensively, showed him what she knew, set to work, and the young master played for her one of Auber's barcarolles and Czerny's variations on the *Pirate*. After the second lesson they talked of literature and the theatre. The hour was prolonged by a quarter, then by a half; soon they no longer looked at the clock. Liszt arrived with mathematical precision, but his ardour kept him there far longer than he had planned, while other

pupils waited in vain at home. Caroline never gave it a thought. She always had some book in her hand, and with a voice so soft that it could hardly be heard she read aloud the little collection of poems that she had copied from Lamartine in her hours of solitude :

" Il est une heure de silence
Où la solitude est sans voix,
Où tout dort, meme l'espérance ;
Où nul zéphyr ne se balance
Sous l'ombre immobile des bois."

The narrow head of the musician, with its long locks, bent over the violet eyes and childish mouth while he listened to this other music, more thrilling than his own. Then he carried the book away with him, took it up again at night, and wondered why the young girl never read him the passages that were most heavily underlined. He repeated them over to himself, improvising melodies to the words :

" Ma voix murmurait tout bas à son oreille
Des soupires, des accords
Aussi purs que l'extase où son regard me plonge,
Aussi doux que le son que nous apporte un songe
Des ineffables bords."

Was it not for him that these words had been assembled by the poet, for him that Caroline had underlined them ? Such enthusiasm filled him that the moment he awoke he dashed off to the Hôtel Saint-Cricq, crossing the Seine, and saluting joyfully the misty towers of Notre-Dame. But suddenly he stopped, much perplexed as he considered how odd would appear his pretext of returning a book at eight o'clock in the morning. So he contented himself with blowing a kiss towards the precious street. Sometimes he ventured as far as beneath her window, thought he saw the curtains stir, glutted

his heart on the sight of the stones and casements of the house. Why did she not feel the presence—so close—of the friend who was transfixed with tenderness before the creamery or the print-shop ? He went away, ready to die because she had not divined his presence. Feverishly and indifferently he hurried through his lessons. At twilight Mme. Liszt wrapped a silk scarf about the head of the tall, slender boy, and he dashed off again to his happiness.

When her illness permitted, the Countess de Saint-Cricq attended the music lessons, and her silent presence in no way disturbed the two students. She felt the reciprocal passion that was being born in them, saw it developing, filling them, and listened wistfully to their artless confidences. Knowing that she was too seriously ill ever to recover, and believing from certain signs that she had not much longer to live, Mme. de Saint-Cricq thought she had better speak to her husband. Although the children were too young to think of marriage for many years, her own heart had discerned in theirs the secret ability to wait for a long time. But His Excellency did not even shrug his shoulders over the question of this absurd little musician. A minister of Charles X did not chastise gutter-cats. " If they love each other," said his wife, " they are not aware of it. At least, do not prevent them from being happy." The Count smiled at his romantic consort,and they did not speak of it again.

Soon after, her illness took a turn for the worse and she could no longer leave her bed. One afternoon, when Franz arrived, he learned that she had died during the night. It seemed to him that his own happiness had just died also, and he collapsed in a chair in the drawing-room. The deep silence of the house was broken only by his stifled sobs and murmurs. Then the door opened

and Caroline came in, white as wax. They looked at each other, she saw his handsome face bathed in tears, and for the first time their arms were about each other, their lips met.

From this time forward, the visits of the beloved took place every day. The piano remained closed, and now it was Caroline who gave the lessons, for, next to love, this is perhaps what women prefer most of all. Literature, history, poetry—what heroisms to review, what apples for this Adam and Eve to nibble! Their simplicity made them joyous in spite of their grief. They made love through Dante, Lamartine, Victor Hugo. The piano was reopened for a moment, then for whole evenings, and Franz related the story of Beethoven and Lenore.

One day he brought a ring on which he had had engraved this motto: *Expectans expectavi.* That evening their souls reached the perfect union.

As Franz was about to leave, a footman entered the drawing-room to summon him before the Count.

"Monsieur," said the latter, "I owe you many thanks for the lessons you have so conscientiously given my daughter. Nevertheless, they can no longer continue. Before her death, the Countess informed me of your inclination for Mlle. Caroline, and no doubt I did wrong to smile at a project which you must realize quite as well as I to be utterly impossible. Your heart and your intuition make it unnecessary for me to dwell on this. Moreover, you must know that my daughter is very soon to marry the Count d'Artigaux, whom I have chosen for her. Monsieur Liszt, farewell. You take with you my gratitude and my esteem."

Franz did not stagger. He went out without a word, without once turning back, not suspecting that there are sorrows from which the soul does not recover. And he never returned.

V

Heartquakes without Eruption

THAT very night he called upon his confessor, the Abbé Bardin. The tall young man, trembling with wounded pride, flung himself at the priest's knees and once more begged him to let him enter a religious order.

But the Abbé Bardin was not merely a connoisseur of souls ; he was also a lover of music, and he believed that once he had conquered his despair young Liszt would find in his art a consolation that would be better suited to his temperament.

" Come, my child," he said, lifting him up, " you must serve God and the Church in your profession as an artist without aspiring incontinently to the sublime virtues of the priesthood."

Mme. Liszt drew more tears from her son, but she also fought with all her persuasive tenderness against his renouncing the world. There was a dramatic struggle when they learned that Mlle. de Saint-Cricq had been dangerously ill and, having barely recovered, was talking of taking the veil. This struggle was prolonged for many days, during which Christian Urhan, the first violin at the Opera, was the only friend whose seraphic presence Franz could endure.

Urhan loved God almost as much as he did Mozart and Glück. He was a round-shouldered little man who fasted every day till six o'clock, then dined at the Café Anglais and, by special permission of the Archbishop of Paris, took his seat every evening as first violin at the Opera, turning his back on the stage so that his eyes

at least might be averted from evil. Like Fra Angelico painting in his cell, Urhan, when he played, placed his soul on its knees. This virtuoso of the second rank made his mark by a style that sprang from the very depths of his faith, and it was because he recognized in young Liszt an inner tendency of the same quality that he came in the afternoon to keep him company. But Franz remained without any real consolation and grew thinner and thinner. His weakness increased to such a degree that he was soon obliged to give up all his pupils and lie down upon his bed, where he spent many weeks with the shutters closed. It was difficult to get a word from him, and the doctor seemed to lose all hope of curing this languor. It lasted more than eighteen months, and word went abroad that he was dead. The *Étoile* printed an obituary article.

Later, Urhan brought with him his viola d'amour, his favourite instrument and one that was more exquisitely adapted than any other to this romantic organization. One day they read together *L'Invitation à la Valse*, a marvellous novelty, and a first rose for the convalescent. The prostration was disappearing slowly, giving place to a new and more violent religious crisis. Taller, very pale, Liszt turned his first steps towards the Church of Saint Vincent de Paul, where he threw himself down in prayer. He resumed his old habit of going to mass every day and became absorbed in observing the strictest practices of the Church of Rome. The image of a woman, pure as the alabaster of the sacred vases, was the sacrifice that he offered with tears to his God. "The terrestrial life," he said to his mother, "is only a malady of the soul, an excitement kept up by the passions. The natural state of the soul is quietude."

Then came poverty to drive him out of himself. He had to begin again giving a few lessons ; but, as he was still too depressed to enter whole-heartedly into his work, he varied his hours of teaching with reading. *René* and the *Génie du Christianisme* became his favourite books. In *René* especially, which he knew entirely by heart, he found mystic pasturage and a cultivated sadness. Like all those who take a passionate pleasure in reading, he went through an intellectual debauch that closely copied the disorder of his sensations. Pascal, Hugo, Montaigne, Kant, Lamennais, Constant and Sénancour were the salads that aroused his appetite without appeasing his hunger. Once more he forgot his pupils in the little dining-room while, leaning at the window, this young man of nineteen dreamed of the loves of Adolphe and Éléonore and watched the women passing in the rue de Provence into which he had just moved.

It was summer. The convalescent stretched his long body, clenched his hands, which had become eager again, and scented something electric, something feverish beneath the roar of the city crowds that made him whinny like a horse on the plains of Hungary at the approach of a storm. Closing the window impatiently, he returned to the piano and amused himself in working out some rhythms to these verses by the young Hugo :

> *" Reste à la pawreté, reste à la solitude,*
> *Et ne te fais étude que de l'éternité."*

But eternity could not delight him for ever. At twenty the past is still so brief that one cannot help living entirely in the future. Franz's past stretched away into a mist of music, Viennese waltzes, glorified coaches heaped with crowns of foliage. Then came that great French

affliction which consecrated him as a child of Paris, and of his century also. It was called Romanticism, a word that rings like a programme for the heart.

For several days past, in this torrid July weather, cries had been heard of "Down with Polignac, long live the Charter!" Liszt jotted down on paper a march that he wished to dedicate to the ruling heroes, Hugo, Lamennais, Lamartine and Benjamin Constant. On July 27, just after noon, he was drawn to his attic window by the noise of the crowd running in the direction of the rue de Richelieu. A little later, the tri-coloured flags went by. Towards evening he heard the crackling rifle-shots of the first of the "Three Glorious Days." The Revolution had started and the Republicans held the Hôtel de Ville. The next day, the 28th, the tocsin sounded from Notre-Dame, and as soon as it was dawn the heavy roar of cannon shook the city. Transported with enthusiasm, Franz, for the first time in many months, sat down at the piano in a furore of improvisation and made a rough sketch of a *Symphonie Révolutionnaire* dedicated to Lafayette.

Urhan arrived, anxious, full of alarming news, fearing the worst for his young friend.

"How is our patient?" he asked Mme. Liszt, who opened the door to him.

She motioned to him to be silent. Seated on his big Plutarch, completely absorbed, Franz was playing, and for a long time they listened, standing there in the corridor. Mme. Liszt said in a low voice: "It was the guns that cured him."

This long apathy of the spirit was now followed by a period of feverish activity. A political and philosophical crisis. Félicien David, the composer, took him

to see the disciples of Saint-Simon, from whom he learned that "the flesh, unjustly anathematized in the Middle Ages, ought to be rehabilitated, that the material welfare of men ought to be assured, and finally that the condition of the poorest and most unfortunate class should be ameliorated." It was made clear to him that liberty counted for no more in a physical and moral universe that was regulated by mathematical laws than it did in a social universe that was ruled by the law of fate. The new religion claimed to "unite the flesh and the spirit and sanctify the one by the other." This doctrine was glorified by David in the publication of his "Ménilmontant, Religious Songs by Félicien David, Apostle, with Words by Bergier, Journeyman Bricklayer." But soon afterwards the temple of Ménilmontant was closed and the apostles carried their wisdom into foreign lands.

For Liszt there remained the memory of his enthusiasm and the idea of "woman the redemptress." He attacked the problems that were aroused in his mind at the thought of art as no longer merely art, art for its own sake, but as something also social and utilitarian. M. d'Ortigue, editor of the *Quotidienne*, and a member of the coterie grouped about still another master, the Abbé de Lamennais, read him a page of his novel in which he was developing the master's doctrines. "There exist eager spirits tormented by the need to love something and believe in it. For these art is a religion. The term art must be accepted here in its widest meaning so as to include every manifestation of human thought, every expression of man under whatever form it appears. These spirits have faith in art, individual faith, faith that is without logic or a rational basis, but a faith that is instinctively sincere, almost involuntary, and the first of the con-

ditions under which genius reveals itself." There was as much discussion over the words of Lamennais, which Liszt repeated on every occasion: "The regeneration of art is a social regeneration."

It was in the midst of this phrase that, on March 9, 1832, Paganini gave his first concert in Paris in the grand hall of the Opera. Liszt went to hear him and studied with passionate interest the face of the Italian of whom it was said that he was an incarnation of the Devil. Never had any virtuoso made so vivid an impression on him. His prodigious technique, in the service of an unapproachable soul that was almost isolated from men, thrilled him with sensuous delight and anguish. It became clear to him that his art was still in its infancy and that he would have to learn everything over again in order to reach those heights where all seems possible. Nevertheless, supernatural as the violinist appeared, something essential was lacking in him: the faculty of dying to himself so as to give himself to others. "A monstrous ego," thought Liszt, "could never be anything but a sad and solitary God." He perceived that all greatness that does not communicate its sorrow fails to deliver itself; that form proclaims itself in vain, it is nothing unless the soul speaks. He knew that the world would never hear another Paganini. But perhaps he also thought that there would never be another Liszt. He sought to formulate all these tendencies, so obscure and yet so clear, and he found this phrase which became his motto: *Génie oblige.*

To Peter Wolf, one of his first pupils, he wrote: "My mind and my fingers are working like two lost souls: Homer, the Bible, Plato, Locke, Byron, Hugo, Lamartine, Chateaubriand, Beethoven, Bach, Hummel, Mozart,

Weber, are all about me. I study them, meditate on them, devour them furiously. In addition, I work four or five hours at exercises (thirds, sixths, octaves, tremolos, repeated notes, cadenzas, etc.). Ah, if only I don't go mad you will find me an artist. Yes, the kind of artist you ask for, the kind of artist that is needed to-day. 'I too am a painter!' exclaimed Michael Angelo, the first time he saw a masterpiece. . . . Though small and poor, your friend has never ceased to repeat those words of that great man since Paganini's last concert."

After two years of eclipse, he suddenly decided to reappear before the public. He announced that he would play the Sonatas and Concertos of Beethoven, which called forth the criticism that his programmes were "badly chosen." Beethoven had just died. The connoisseurs were pronouncing him a barbarian. Cherubini said, "He makes me sneeze." But Liszt insisted upon his favourite music without regard to fashion or success, well assured that the artist's mission is to serve his gods. Once more he felt the volcano in himself. Berlioz called it "heartquakes without an eruption." There were three concerts, in immediate succession.

One day, as he was out walking, he met his friend D'Ortigue in company with a priest. It was the Abbé de Lamennais. Franz was thunderstruck. His whole soul rose to his lips, and in how different a fashion than before the Abbé Bardin! Oh, how small and inexperienced he felt before him! Here was the man who "broke but did not bend," the only one who had dared to take issue with Rome, whose love of truth perhaps surpassed his love of God. So strong was the attraction felt by Liszt that he at once chose this lucid, revolutionary head as the general of his conscience. Lamennais, a

great lover of music, had just had the idea of a De Profundis in which the plain-chant should be united to the *faux-bourdon*, and he at once spoke of it to the young man at his elbow, inviting him to La Chênaie. Liszt accepted with ardour, and set off one day for that "oasis in the desert of Brittany" where, in front of the château, a spacious garden stretched away, divided by a terrace planted with lindens and with a tiny chapel at the bottom.

Franz became deeply attached to this great, vehement spirit. He learned from him that the work of the rarest artists is their lives. He learned the philosophy of music, the priestess of the art; he learned that, like the sentinels of the Lord, he must henceforth watch, pray and strive, day and night. Was not the Eternal Geometrician the greatest virtuoso, since his work was the world? Thence it followed that the laws of creation were the same as those of art and that beauty was identical with life. To know and to understand the work of God was the object of science; to render it in its material or sensible aspects was the object of art. "Art for art's sake is an absurdity. The perfecting of the creature whose progress it manifests is its aim." But its roots did not strike down merely into the powers of men; it was united to God through love. Art was therefore never either haphazard or disorderly; its real discipline was poetry, its method excellence. It had no limitations, since it was the very thing that God had most deliberately left unlimited: a progression, a development. The highest duty of the artist was to furnish the divinity with modes of expression that were perpetually new.

It was an important visit, followed, in Franz, by an advance along the road of inner development, of which

the death of his father and his renunciation of Caroline de Saint-Cricq had marked the first stages.

The second shock he received this same winter from Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*. He had already been to see Berlioz, two years before, at his home, and they had spoken of Goethe's *Faust*, which Liszt did not know and which he at once hastened to get. It chanced to be the very eve of the concert at which Habeneck conducted the *Fantastique* for the first time. The effect was overwhelming. Liszt applauded until he could do so no longer and led the new hero away by force to dine in his lodgings in the rue de Provence. Shortly afterward, Berlioz left for the Villa Medici, from which he was now returning, boiling over with passion, his pockets full of manuscripts. On December 9, at the Conservatory, they heard the *Episode from the Life of an Artist* and the *Return to Life*, in which he had given passionate vent to his love for Henrietta Smithson. The musical expression returned to this unceasingly in the score under the form of an endlessly modulated "fixed idea." It was the first expression of the *leitmotif*: pictures of an astonishing clearness, which in their coloration recalled the canvases of Delacroix. For Liszt it was a revelation of descriptive music, of the symbolical relationship that exists between the arts, and he discerned how Bach had composed his *Caprice on the Departure of his Beloved Brother*, how Beethoven had written his *Pastoral*, how he himself might reach the point where he could catch and transcribe the rapture and grief that were present together in his soul.

The third and last of these shocks came to him from a young artist, unknown and ill, who was making his début in Paris under the auspices of Pleyel: Chopin.

When this frail aristocrat sat down at the piano, Liszt realized that once more he was in the presence of a talent that would reveal his own possibilities to himself. Captivated from the first notes, Franz listened to this soul, which was so reserved, so modest and of so extraordinarily precious a quality. He loved him at once with his usual spontaneous ardour. There are natures that are rich through exuberance, others that are rich through exclusiveness. Chopin belonged to the latter class. His personality was too pleasing to allow one time for reflection. His very appearance was like a convolvulus, swaying on a stem of incredible delicacy, his coloured petals of so aerial a tissue that it seemed as if the least touch would destroy him. And Chopin, who dreaded unintelligent applause far more than not being applauded at all, appreciated the full value of this admiration. They offered each other their friendship. Chopin came to the rue de Provence, where he met Victor Hugo ; Liszt went to the Chausée d'Antin, where he saw the Princess Potocka ; and if Franz, on his side, loved the Pole's *Études*, the latter declared that he wished he could steal Franz's manner of playing them. He even dedicated them to Liszt.

All that Liszt had learned from Paganini in the technical sphere he now learned from this new friend in the sphere of the inner life. It was an experience of equal depth and importance. And the poet's famous *rubato* was the first real caress of a woman that the tall, innocent pianist had received. " If one could imagine," wrote Schumann, " an Æolian harp with the whole scale of sounds, and an artist's hand scattering these sounds, pell-mell, into all sorts of fantastic arabesques, in such a way that one always heard one fundamental bass voice and one

delicate, high, sustained note—one would have an image that somewhat resembled this playing of Chopin's."

The latter quickly created about him a rarefied atmosphere, chose his relationships and formed for himself a very small circle among his compatriots and a few unusual French men and women. He feared the complications and excitements of a social existence; he feared especially the crumbling of his own sensibility. He was planning to give a housewarming, now that his lodgings were ready, but he never quite got to the point, always deciding that some indispensable accessory was still lacking. It was certainly not flowers, for these were always there in profusion the year round.

Several of his friends decided, one evening, to impose on him without further delay the joys of a surprise-party. Franz organized it. They looted a grocery in the quarter and arrived, a dozen strong, each one carrying his package. The apartment was dark, but the master of the house, with his kindly, languid grace, hastened to light some additional candles. They gobbled up this improvised midnight feast, drank several bottles, and then all eyes turned towards Chopin. He went to the piano, near which, on a small table, stood a single portrait, that of Liszt. He opened the Pleyel, sat down, placed his hands on the keyboard.

The company consisted of Heinrich Heine, the singer Adolphe Nourrit, Hiller, Meyerbeer, the poet Mickiewicz, George Sand, Eugène Delacroix, and the Countess d'Agoult. In the mirror tilted over the fireplace, Liszt watched the fair curls and lovely oval face of this young woman whose acquaintance he had just made. Thanks to the mirror, he saw them in two ways.

VI

Portrait of a Countess

MARIE D'AGOULT had just entered upon her twenty-eighth year. She was the daughter of the Count de Flavigny, a hot-tempered personage of the highest rank who, during the emigration, had married at Frankfort-on-the-Main a young widow, born a von Bethmann, a member of one of the most powerful banking families of old Germany. Brought up partly in Frankfort, partly in the manor-house of Mortier, in Touraine, Catholic on her father's side and Protestant on her mother's, Marie de Flavigny had never been quite sure as to the nationality of her intelligence. While she was a Tourangelle in her heart, her wit, and her clear-headedness, certain roots of her sentiments and temperament plunged down into the flower-beds of German poetry. A foreigner in the country in which she was born, as well as in that in which she lived, she remained always a little strange to those who loved her and even to herself. Her mother and an old German nurse had fed her on Grimm's Fairy Tales, Gellert's Fables, and Schiller's Monologues; and her father saw that she was given lessons in mythology. She knew about the Rape of Proserpine long before she had heard of the Annunciation of the Virgin, and she was still ignorant of the manger of the Infant Jesus when she was "already marvelling at the prodigious cradle of Hercules." Her paternal grandmother, an old eighteenth-century dame, advised her to pay a visit once a year to the Bon Dieu: a good example of the polite attitude main-

tained towards religion in this house of faultless good taste.

As a young girl she was taken to Paris. She attended the lectures of the Abbé Gaultier, took lessons from M. Abraham, dancing-master to the late Queen Marie Antoinette, and crossed foils with Mlle. Donnadieu. At the death of her father, Mlle. de Flavigny passed her period of mourning at Frankfort, where she saw Goethe and Chateaubriand. The idea of glory and poetry imposed themselves so powerfully upon her mind that she acquired "an instinctive adoration, a veritable cult of beauty that may have been Germanic or pagan, but was certainly far from Christian, far from French." She was taken away from this to be plunged in the mawkish, worldly piety of the convent of the Sacred Heart. This hydropathic regimen may not have been much of a tonic for the soul, but it made her nervous reactions all the keener. Physically, at least, Marie had reached her perfection. In vain had they taught her that "human nature is the devil." When she rejoined her mother in her house on the Place Vendôme, she decided, as she looked at herself in the mirror, that the good sisters had somewhat exaggerated. Tall, slender, very fair, she seemed like some Rhenish princess, save for the French precision of her eyebrows and her nose and the mocking curve of her mouth. She was especially vain of her colouring.

This beauty, in addition to a large fortune, quickly attracted suitors. But with Manfred, Werther, Adolphe and Léone Léoni as her favourite heroes, the idea of a marriage of convenience displeased her. However, this was the sort of marriage she made, perhaps with the presentiment that, in one way or another, romance is

only bought at the price of difficulty. On May 16, 1827, at the Church of the Assumption, Marie married Count Charles d'Agoult, a colonel of cavalry, Master of the Horse to the Dauphin. He was twenty years older than she.

The first years of the new household were peaceful and somewhat tedious. Three children were born. The Revolution of 1830 occupied them in a measure, then the purchase of the Château de Croissy, in Brie. There the custom of receiving the neighbours for the infliction of readings from the poets soon gave the Countess the taste for a *salon* in Paris. With her very cultivated mind, a certain interesting coldness—six feet of ice on top of twenty feet of lava, people said—together with her horror of the commonplace, her seriousness, and finally her handsome fortune, Mme. d'Agoult possessed most of the qualifications for insuring the success of such an undertaking. She did succeed. She became the "Corinne of the Quai Malaquais," where her house stood at the corner of the rue de Beaune. But in spite of her popularity she still found life tedious. In June, 1834, she went to see Mlle. Lenormant, the celebrated fortune-teller, who received the greatest personages in her dirty office on the rue de Tournon. "A complete change will very soon take place in your life," the sorceress told her. "You will even change your name because of it, and your new name will become famous throughout Europe. You will leave your native land for a long time. You will love a man who will make a sensation in the world. Beware of your imagination. It is easily aroused and will lead you into dangers from which you will escape only through great courage."

A friend to whom she related this interview said,

"You lack nothing now but the great man." When Liszt entered her house, she was approaching that period of life when one suspects others less than oneself. Berlioz had introduced him, but with a reserve and a caution that seemed droll enough in that headlong lover. Liszt was fresh from his first successful love-affair, that with Mme. de la Prunarède, and he imagined that when you have possessed one woman you have obtained the secret of all the others. Marie d'Agoult, however, stirred something in him besides the senses—curiosity, even pride; in fact he did not quite know what. George Sand was the counsellor of his growing passion. She seemed touched by it, as if she divined that there was something in this affair that condemned all the licentiousness of the character of Lelia, on which she was just then busily working. The simplicity and the intensity of the young pianist seemed to promise too quick a victory to the dangerously clear-sighted beauty. She therefore advised common sense: pleasure, certainly, but not love. Franz allowed himself to be more or less convinced; he restrained himself for some time, and, as he was frequently invited to the Hôtel d'Agoult, a coldness of several weeks won for him what he had desired from the beginning. Beneath the coquetry of a restless woman he divined a ferment of the mind and senses, a revolt against everything which until now had made her life an example of that "comme il faut" which the French aristocracy, like the French middle class, set up as the first of the social dogmas. It was not merely the lover that he incarnated, but the liberator. She, in her turn, was to become the "redemptress," for she was to open his intelligence to a better knowledge of itself.

Their passion was born beautiful and exacting. They yielded to it, Franz as a novice crowned at last, Marie dreaming of a way of proclaiming her enfranchisement with a certain glory. Then one of the Countess's children, little Louison, fell seriously ill. They watched over her together. Their love was chastened again by this death-bed and grew stronger through the grief and solitude they were sharing. When Louison died, Marie thought she was going mad and believed that God had brought down vengeance upon her for her sin. Well, had she not paid for it now? She had never known very well how to pray, in spite of the strong impulse to prayer in her soul. But her frank and open heart could receive nothing of the divine except love. Human love, difficult, full of desires.

As for Franz, he finished his *Pensée des Morts*, which had been begun at La Chênaie. The image of Caroline ran through it, and he yielded himself to an alternating memory of his voluptuous delight and his childhood. Near the half-open window, his mother listened to him while she worked. He came up to her, kissed her on the forehead, and, above the flowering chestnuts, breathed in the spring that was charged with adventure.

VII

"In altâ solitudine"

ON the evening of August 21, 1835, a post-chaise stopped before the Hôtellerie des Balances at Geneva. Two travellers stepped down, a young woman, fair and beautiful, whose dress was the last word in Parisian elegance, and a tall, awkward youth whose long, straight hair fell about a rather girlish face.

No one as yet, either in the lower or in the upper city, knew anything about this couple of the broken banns. But in Paris, the double abduction of Mme. d'Agoult by Liszt and of Liszt by Mme. d'Agoult, was already an immense scandal. The lovers set out at once in search of lodgings and soon found them in the rue Tabazan, at the corner of the rue des Belles-Filles, from which there is a view over the Salève and the Jura. On the threshold of France, this tiny canton, hardly visible on the map, sheltered a multitude of faded grandeurs, fallen royalties, and, as one sees, certain fugitive lovers. The new arrivals at once began to arrange for themselves a tender, studious life.

Every other day was consecrated to the piano, the other to the literary work planned by Marie. Franz registered at the Academy as a student and attended the lectures on philosophy by Professor Choisy. In the evening there was music. Marie would devour the face of her hero, while the whole quarter gathered about their windows. How beautiful to her seemed this royal solitude she had just chosen, in the company of this brilliant soul, how far from the empty circle of feelings

and ideas in which she had moved until then! In the midst of a piece, Franz would stop short, so clearly did the eyes of his beloved express the depths of her heart. They embraced each other on the sofa, crushed each other's lips. Marie believed she understood Franz better than she was understood by him. She was living through every pore, and, far from seeking self-forgetfulness, sought rather to explain herself. From the union of their instincts and their thoughts was born what she called "the divine sense of things." Passion, simple liberty to reach that sphere where souls mingle in ineffable peace. She lamented not merely the errors but even more the pleasures of those who do not love. She who had always received, discovered, for the first time, the joy of giving. For was it not she who gave the most? How unencumbered was the life of this lover, except for the dutiful affection he felt for the mother he had left. But her renunciations, husband, children, fortune, position, reputation, were a "dot" of some value. She regretted nothing. When Franz was absent for a few hours she was all the more conscious of her joy; then, suddenly anxious, she would watch for his return. She would take her place at the window whence she could see the wall of the Juras behind which lay France. Nothing drew her heart there any longer. Her new country extended no farther than the end of the street and the Place Saint-Antoine, where the gentlemen of Geneva bowed so ceremoniously to one another.

In the town, everybody was beginning to hear about the young Hungarian and his striking mistress; and, although the aristocracy turned upon them the stoniest of faces, a few of them, and several of the bourgeois, sought their acquaintance. Among these were the illus-

trious botanist Pyrame de Candolle, James Fazy, the politician, Adolphe Pictet, the scientist, Simonde de Sismondi, the historian, and Alphonse Denis, geologist, archæologist, orientalist. One day, to the great joy of Mme. d'Agoult, they met Prince Belgiojoso, his wife and the Countess Potocka, three friends of Chopin. The Genevese gentlemen came to the rue Tabazan mostly in the evening, and more or less without the knowledge of their families. How alive, how interesting was the love-story of this romantic *ménage*!

The Countess Marie enjoyed discussions, and with an eloquence that was also considerate and in the best of good taste she would hold her own against these intellectuals who were usually more bashful than solemn. She even disputed with Pictet, "the Universal," or the Major, as he was called, an æsthete and writer of real discernment who liked to be sententious. They talked philosophy and religion. Mme. d'Agoult, always something of a Voltairian, was upheld by Candolle, but would finally give way, not so much to the arguments of the "Universal" as to those of Franz, which overflowed with mystic transports. Pictet's conclusion was that "the sins of genius carry in themselves their own absolution." These discussions set vibrating in Franz the chords of his "inner harmonica," some of which had not sounded for many years. Sismondi talked politics. The Princess Belgiojoso spoke of China and the Chinese, whose language she was learning. Then the Prince would sing fragments from Bellini and a song of Schubert's. Finally, Franz would sit down at the piano.

It was a refreshment after the literary work of the day. For each of them had spent hours at his table, pen in hand. Marie, in her small, fine writing, had

polished up an article on Victor Hugo for James Fazy's paper, and Franz had made big fly-tracks across the sheets in which he was developing the ideas that had been aroused in him by his visit to Lamennais. He was gathering them together in a manifesto, entitled "Concerning the Situation of Artists." Reform, reform! was his cry, and the words that came to him most naturally were always those of priests, initiators, apostles, servants of that religion of art the unacknowledged rights of which he was always proclaiming. Then he pleaded for programmes such as he had conceived. Once for all he banished the platitudinous romances, the duos, the hotch-potches that "shrivelled your ears," and replaced them by Mozart, Beethoven, Weber, and his friends Berlioz and Chopin. This judicial rôle pleased him, and he sent his manuscripts, one after another, to the *Gazette Musicale*.

One day, Marie admitted, in confusion, that their purse was empty. From now on they would have to use more foresight in keeping the pot boiling, since . . .

"Since?"

". . . the event will take place towards the end of December."

Franz passionately seized in his arms the woman who was promising him the most disturbing of all the pledges of love. It occurred to them to organize a concert with the help of Prince Belgiojoso. This wealthy amateur suggested holding it for the benefit of the Italian political refugees. Liszt, who had already given so much in this way, agreed with enthusiasm, relying on some other means of getting out of his difficulties, and the concert took place in the presence of Jerome Bonaparte, ex-King of Westphalia, a former minister of Charles X, and all the

Genevese patricians. Liszt was received with sympathy and admiration, and the ladies considered him so handsome that they changed the epithet "reprehensible," which they had hitherto applied to his conduct, for that of "original."

This seemed even more just when they learned that the great pianist had spontaneously offered to give the Conservatory, which had just been established, a free course of piano lessons during the following winter. In order to live, therefore, he had to return to the old system of private lessons. This small, regular manna would at least assure them a living. As for the course, Liszt flung himself into it whole-heartedly, distributing praise, blame, irony. He even kept a class-book in which he wrote down his comments opposite each name :

"Julie Raffard. Very remarkable musical feeling. Very small hands. Brilliant execution.

"Amélie Calame. Pretty fingers, diligent and careful, almost too much so. Capable of teaching.

"Marie Demellayer. Vicious method (if it can be called a method), great zeal, mediocre temperament. Grimaces and contortions. Glory to God in the highest and peace to men of good will.

"Ida Milliquet. Genevese artist, flabby and mediocre. Good enough appearance at the piano.

"Jenny Gambini. Fine eyes."

And peace, love, the small, tranquil circumstances amid which he was living, stirred him to composing once more. He sought to catch on the piano the impressions of a walk along the lake, an excursion into the Alps, the poetic colouring of which had been suggested to him by Obermann's orchestration. Marie read Shakespeare or Byron to him while he improvised. In this way were formed one by one the first poems of the *Années*

de Pèlerinage which opened with the *Cloches de G. . . .* As an epigraph they chose a text from *Childe Harold*:

> *"I live not in myself, but I become*
> *Portion of that around me."*

While he was writing, the bells of the neighbouring Cathedral of Saint-Pierre flooded the rooms with their sweet chimes. He jotted down his *Lac de Wallenstadt*, *Au bord d'une source*, the *Vallée d'Obermann*, *Fleurs mélodiques des Alpes*, *Psaume*, leaves from his first lyrical and pictorial album.

They were happy, as one can be in certain conditions of a precarious stability. Their very celebrity forced them to be so. But at times even their good hours were veiled in a complicated silence. They sought for the cause everywhere but in their happiness. Marie found this phrase which expressed it well enough: "I have a friend, but my sorrow has no friend."

As for Franz, although he had at first been homesick, he was quickly acclimatized and wrote to his mother to send him his library, Montaigne, Bossuet, Fénelon, Chénier, and Lamartine.

On Friday, December 18, at ten in the evening, little Blandine was born, "natural daughter of Franz Liszt, professor of music, aged twenty-four years and one month, and of Catherine-Adéläide Méran, lady of independent means, aged twenty-four years (she was thirty), born in Paris, both of them unmarried and domiciled at Geneva." In his joy Liszt dedicated his *Cloches* to the baby and hastened to the jeweller where Catherine-Adéläide had recently ordered a seal. He had it mounted in a ring, engraved with this motto, adorned with a rhododendron: *In altâ solitudine.*

VIII

A Journey to Chamonix

WITH the windows open to the spring he wrote to George Sand and invited her to join them. "For the last six months I have done nothing but write, scrawl and scribble notes of all kinds and all colours. If they were reckoned up I am sure there would be billions of them. I have also become scandalously dumb—as the proverb says, as stupid as a musician." None the less, the rumour spread through the musical world that Liszt could no longer compose. Berlioz alone, having seen his *Traveller's Album*, his *Nocturne*, his *Fantaisie sur la Juive*, exclaimed, "To-day we have the right to expect everything from Liszt as a composer." And, as a matter of fact, his sentimental retirement had marvellously nourished his genius. That fertile slumber which, with artists, precedes periods of fecundity, had come to a close, and Franz overflowed with gratitude to Marie because of it. With her the first exaltation had been succeeded by something more perfect, dearer to her heart in its tranquil plenitude. She would have reproached herself for any remorse as for a weakness, and she saw nothing but grandeur in her admiration for her lover. They both adored their little girl, Franz perhaps more demonstratively. He was still unused to it and bursting with paternal love, while she adjusted herself more sensibly to this new maternity. She had done a good deal of work ever since Adolphe Pictet had drawn up for her a methodical programme of reading on the history of religions. And often in the evening, when they were

alone, they remained for long hours, their heads bent over their books. In the main she shared Franz's republican ideals and his ideas about art, but without that ardour which hurried him with so much appetite towards the new. She had not forgotten her father's lessons, and the great lady remained somewhat distrustful of everything that lacked *patina*. *Jocelyn* displeased them, *Lélia* delighted them. They urged George Sand to come, but she made an excuse of her divorce and from month to month put off her departure.

When she finally arrived, in the first days of December, with her two children, her papers, her pipes and her man's clothes, Marie and Franz had already left for Chamonix. Sand set out to find them. At the Hôtel de l'Union she discovered their traces in the guest-book where Liszt had registered as a musician-philosopher, born on Parnassus, coming from the Land of Doubt, journeying towards Truth. Sand added her own description:

Name of the travellers: The Piffoëls family.
Place of residence: Nature.
Whence come: From God.
Whither going: To Heaven.
Birthplace: Europe.
Occupation: Saunterers.
Date of their titles: From the beginning of time.
Conveyed by whom: By public opinion.

Adolphe Pictet appeared in his turn.

"Has Monsieur come to arrest them?" asked the innkeeper, approaching him respectfully.

"Arrest whom?"

"That family of gipsies with long hair and blouses who make an infernal racket up there and laugh at the

king, the law and the innkeepers. You can't hear yourself speak. All my guests are packing off."

"How many of them are there?"

"Four, five, how do I know? . . . Men, women, they come and go, always changing. And there are two children."

For eight days there was a fine debauch of eloquence, George Sand, usually so taciturn, deafening every one with her words, Franz with his humanitarian theories, and Major Pictet with the doctrines of the philosopher Schelling. His celebrated aphorism, "The absolute is identical with itself," kept them awake a whole night in the midst of cigar smoke. George, with her tightly fitting riding-coat, her azure cravat and her crop, made a fair enough jockey. The "Universal," in spite of his learning and for all his wit, used a pipe. As a specialist in Sanscrit, he conferred on each of them a mystical incarnation. Sand was Kamorrupi, "she who is transformed at will"; Liszt, Madhousvara, "the melodious one"; the Countess became Arabella or Manas, "thought." In short, a very amiable sort of Satanism which, as George said, partook rather of the nature of the cockchafer than of the Devil. They went on excursions to the Montanvers, to the Glacier des Bossons and to the Tête Noire. They escaped without difficulty many "terrifying" precipices and "lugubrious" crevasses. From the back of his mule Franz held forth:

"Never doubt that the future of the world exists in everything. Of what importance are the mistakes, the weaknesses and the dissensions of the champions of truth? They are fighting to-day scattered and sick from the disorder and the intolerant vanity of the century. Lost in a frightful *mêlée*, they misunderstand one another,

flee from one another, wound one another, instead of pressing together under the same banner. This generation must pass and disappear like a winter torrent. After it will come new and better disciplined fighters, taught by our defeats, picking up our weapons, scattered on the field of battle, and discovering the magic power of the arrows of Hercules."

"Come to my arms!" cried George. "And may God grant it! You speak and think quite well for a musician."

The caravan arrived at Fribourg and rushed into the cathedral to hear the famous organ built by Mooser. Liszt climbed at once to the organ-loft and took possession of the keyboard. He was in one of his radiant, animated moods.

"Organ, organ, O Pope of instruments!"

His Florentine profile stood out clearly against the woodwork. There was a prelude, then he attacked Mozart's *Dies Irae*, at first very softly, through a series of modulations on a single stop, to test the docility of the instrument. Feeling it respond, he made it speak in several voices. Little by little the modes of expression were multiplied and combined, and the soul of the artist spread through all the pipes of the vast organism.

"*Quantus tremor est futurus*
Quando judex est venturus."

The adagio began, sombre and severe, in which the modulations were combined in a series of dissonances and unfolded like delicate masses of mist. Now and then there emerged more distinct forms that seemed to shine with an inner light, but they dissolved anew, enveloped by others equally fugitive. When expectation

had been raised to its greatest intensity, the prelude gave place to a theme as grave and precise as a sentence of ancient wisdom that was repeated in strict order by successively higher voices, after the manner of Bach's fugues. Then another phrase emerged, quick and brilliant. It was as sparkling, vibrant and erratic as the first *motif* had been simple in its monotonous grandeur. A contest began between the two spirits. The lighter attacked its grave adversary, trying to lure it with its fascinations away from its austere path. Calling to its aid the most brilliant notes of the organ, it multiplied its caprices till the latter swelled suddenly into cries of passion. Breast to breast they fought and intertwined, forming an aerial Laocoön. But the former maintained its ascendancy and forced the other to return to its fundamental tone, and harmony was finally re-established by a mutual reconciliation in which the two forces were at last blended.

Arabella listened with all her soul. Her long, fair hair, loosened by the rain, fell over her hands. She dreamed that the avenging angel was passing over her, but without striking her, for she was nothing but love, defeat and charity.

There was one matter which his friends concealed from Liszt and of which they spoke only in whispers among themselves, the sudden appearance of a Viennese pianist of whom it was reported that no one, not even Liszt, was the peer. His name was Thalberg, and he was having a triumphant success in Paris and at the same time avenging society for the affront the gipsy heart-breaker had inflicted on it. When Liszt learned of this menace to his glory he imagined at first, since it did not

affect his happiness, that he was indifferent to it. But Marie soon noticed that her lover's pride was suffering. An artistic triumph presently became an urgent necessity for Franz. Marie was aware of this before he was, and, however much it cost her to make the first break in this year of solitude, she urged him to go. "Delight of my life," he said, as he kissed her eyes, "it is a necessity for both of us, for you even more than for me. I am impatient to have my love for my Beatrice glorified in the face of the world."

But when he reached Paris, Thalberg had just left. The duel was postponed until winter, when it was planned that Liszt should make his reappearance at one of Berlioz's concerts. In the meanwhile, he studied the new composer's works, which, it was said, reduced those of Chopin to insignificance. He found them mediocre, and thought it was not unfitting to express this opinion in the *Revue Musicale*, and he maintained that if this was the school of the future he had no desire to join forces with it. The matter was taken up with intense feeling on all sides; what had been a statement of beliefs was turned into a partisan quarrel, and people were waiting for the adversaries to appear on the scene. Liszt, accordingly, reappeared before the public on December 18, at the concert of his friend Berlioz. His entry on the platform took place amid an icy silence. This rather pleased the virtuoso, who was never so stirred as by a fine obstacle. He had placed his transcription of the *Fantastique* on the programme. Never had the artist appeared more powerful or more winning, and in a quarter of an hour the hostile crowd was completely won over. As he had wished, it was in a burst of enthusiasm that Beatrice triumphed.

Three months later, Thalberg returned from Austria, his pride nettled in turn, and was heard at the Théâtre Italien, where he had a great success. Chopin said, "Thalberg plays excellently, but he is not the man for me. He plays the *forte* and the *piano* with the pedal, but not with the hand, plays tenths as easily as I do octaves, and wears diamond shirt-buttons." Liszt's response was to hire the opera-house. When the curtain rose, he appeared so small and so slender before the enormous hall that the entire audience was troubled at his audacity; but at the tenth measure the assurance of victory doubled the great waves of pleasure in every heart. So there was a tie. The "rubber" took place in the *salons* of the Princess Belgiojoso who was giving a concert in the interest of some charity, and this time the two pianists appeared together. Thalberg played his fantasia *Moses*, and Liszt his *Niobe*. Liszt was the first to feel the vanity of such a tournament; and, as a circle formed about him, he remarked: "Truly, are artists necessarily enemies because the one does not accord to the other a value that seems to him exaggerated by the crowd? Are they reconciled because, in other than artistic matters, they mutually appreciate and esteem each other?" But the public loves to pass judgment, and it was not satisfied until the following decision had been uttered by a witty woman: "Thalberg is the first pianist in the world, Liszt is the only one."

IX

"O Seasons, O Châteaux, what soul is without faults?"

MARIE had again taken up her quarters in Paris, joyfully, for at Geneva she had felt like a fish out of water. She explored public opinion with her delicate antennæ, and without seeking to defy society she gathered about her a few friends and collected the beginnings of a circle in which there would be room only for artists and a few privileged persons. To this end she chose not to inaugurate a critical *salon* to which the merely curious would have flocked, but simply to make use of her homely rooms at the Hôtel de France, in the Rue Lafitte. George Sand soon joined her friends there and installed herself above them, in the entresol. One day they would be visited by Chopin, or Eugène Sue, Ballanche, or Sainte-Beuve; on another it would be Lamennais, Nourrit, or Heinrich Heine. There was excellent music, and Liszt prepared there his series of concerts. But, as happens periodically with artists in their path of development, he was dominated by two necessities: that of a search for the intellectual suggestions furnished by nature, and the refreshing plunge into some work that was foreign to his own genius.

As for the first, George renewed her invitation to Marie and Franz to visit her at Nohant. Beethoven would serve for the other, as Liszt had undertaken to transcribe the nine symphonies for the piano. A fertilizing labour in which the disciple, by studying the

master's thought, cultivated his own, discovered and expressed himself.

An illness delayed Marie's departure until February, but she finally joined the good Piffoël, who had given up her own room for her, repapered the walls, put up new curtains and hung the Countess's portrait above her bed, the symbol of her ubiquity. Liszt remained several weeks by himself; then Marie returned, and, in the early spring, they finally took the diligence for Nohant. It lay in the middle of Berry, one league from La Châtre. A comfortable, somewhat rustic house in the style of Louis XVI, with a garden full of flowers and a small wood strewn with myrtles. They were heartily welcomed by George, who had shortly before been divorced and seemed now half a châtelaine, half a savage. Free of her husband, free of her lover, she was filled with joy and announced that she had had "enough and to spare of great men" and swore never to look at them again except as friends. (Till the next time.) The house was already full: the novelist's two children, Pelletan, their teacher, a young Nivernais by the name of Gévaudan, the writer-diplomat Félicien Malefille, the actor Bocage. Even with Marie and Franz it was not full enough to suit George, who still found means to house visitors from the neighbourhood. Every one lived in complete independence. They played, they walked, they bathed in the Indre, they rested. Marie's room was on the ground-floor, and in it was Franz's beautiful piano, brought there at great expense. A screen of lime-trees, in front of the window, bathed the house in their pale shadow, and all together the company had weighty readings on the terrace: Shakespeare, Montaigne, especially Hofmann, each commenting in turn.

But they also worked in their various cells, for Marie wished this also, and Marie, the firm and gentle, had to be obeyed. While she herself took up again her Dante and her grammars, Franz spread out on his desk pencils, ruled paper and scores, and studied every phrase of the *Pastoral*, afterwards reducing it for the piano, striving to preserve all the sonorousness of the orchestra. His fingers slid up and down the keyboard, picking out a theme, sustaining the flutes and the double-bass, sounding the cymbals and succeeding in peopling this solitude with sixty musicians.

George listened at her open window. She laid aside for a moment the thick manuscript of *Mauprat*, which had absorbed her for weeks, and noted in her journal: "When Franz plays, I am comforted. All my sorrows become poetry, all my instincts are exalted. I love these broken phrases which he flings on the piano and which remain half in the air. The leaves of the lindens finish the melody for me. . . . Mighty artist, sublime in great things, always superior in small ones, and yet sad, gnawed by a secret wound. Fortunate man, loved by a beautiful woman, intelligent and chaste—what do you lack, miserable ingrate! Ah, if only I were loved . . ."

Always her complaint. And this in spite of the example before her eyes, the "secret wound" of two exceptional lovers who were none the less separated by almost imperceptible misunderstandings of the mind and heart—so imperceptible that they could be caught only by a practised ear. What were they, exactly? The novelist watched, and thought she recognized herself much more in Liszt than in Marie. He had the same directness, the same way of behaving, the same spend-

thrift passion. With the Countess there was a kind of reserve, an intelligence that was more critical than creative, a judgment that seemed cold because it was always clear and informed. Already they loved each other better in trouble than in joy. Was it because strings full of knots are stronger than ribbons?

"Galley-slaves," said George, "who don't know the value of any chain." Franz had her sympathy, Marie her curiosity. She carried her off on her walks and questioned her rather sharply. She would have liked to shake this indolent creature, for Marie replied unwillingly, or only in a few ambiguous words: "Alas, our heart is as powerless for happiness as it is for sorrow."

In the evening, after dinner, they played charades, they put on disguises. Or Liszt sat down again at the piano and played Schubert's *Lieder*, while the company gathered in silence in the drawing-room. All except Marie, who walked on the terrace in her light-coloured dress, with her head wrapped in a veil that fell to her waist. She walked with a measured step that seemed not to touch the gravel and described a wide circle cut in half by the rays of a lamp around which the garden-moths came to die. The moon sank behind the lindens. In the distance, a nightingale struggled feebly against the Erl-king. The steps of the stroller varied between the *andante* and the *maestoso*, and her movements were so rhythmical that she seemed a living lyre. At last she went and sat down on a branch which, flexible as it was, bent scarcely more than if the weight had been a phantom's. Whereupon the music stopped, as if some bond attached it to the life of this solitary woman.

When every one went to bed, George and Franz still remained in the drawing-room, working by the light of

the same lamp. Each of them lighted his pipe. George picked up her *Mauprat*, and at once her pen began to write, without a hitch, without an erasure, lifted from time to time to jot down on the margin some notes for the next book. As for Franz, he went over the draught of his "piano scores," as he called his symphonic transcriptions. "We had then," he wrote to a friend, "three months of an intellectual life the memory of whose moments I have kept religiously in my heart."

On leaving Berry, at the end of July, Liszt and Mme. d'Agoult went first to Lyons. A sad city where it rained all the time, where there were strikes, famines, revolutions. Some great popular distress was going on at the time which touched the heart of the disciple of Saint-Simon. He gave his traditional charity concert in company with the singer Nourrit, another Puritan mystic of the same type as Urhan. (He had once given back to Meyerbeer his rôle as Raoul, in *Les Huguenots*, because of an alcove scene which he considered too frivolous.) A great success for Schubert, whose *Lieder* Franz had transcribed at Nohant while Marie had composed French words. Among those who applauded most heartily was a very young man who had himself presented later: Louis de Ronchaud, the poet. He was not yet quite sure whom he most admired, the pianist who had just discharged his fireworks or the woman with the white veil. They saw him the next day at the hotel. Then every day, and almost every hour. Since Franz had had his flirtation with George, Marie had decided to have one of her own. They wounded each other's hearts at the expense of a third person. But Liszt was so little

alarmed that he invited Ronchaud to accompany them on the road to Italy. For it was to Italy they were going now. By the time they had reached Chambéry, however, Ronchaud was too unhappy to go farther. Marie showed her hand too plainly. They separated abruptly. The young man hid his tears from Marie, but he flung himself on Franz's breast. They swore a lasting friendship, and indeed Ronchaud proved a faithful heart.

The next day, they went up the Saone towards Mâcon to visit Lamartine at Saint-Point. During the afternoon, as the stage was rounding a hill, they suddenly caught sight of the château. A real château, belonging to a real country gentleman this time, with two towers, a chapel, a park, all very different from the little dormitory in Berry about which Mme. Piffoël galloped on horseback. The travellers were thrilled with respectful admiration and poetry. M. de Lamartine received them at his threshold, surprised and delighted, and the whole house was astir to make these illustrious visitors comfortable for a night. Perfect mistress of her household as an Englishwoman knows so well how to be, Mme. de Lamartine attended to everything, while the poet made the tour of the garden with Franz and Marie.

"*Voilà le banc rustique où s'asseyait mon père.*"

He showed them all the relics dear to his splendid heart, even the table, inkstand and pen which were serving him at the moment in the writing of *La Chute d'un ange*. A night of stars rose over this Burgundian peace. After dinner, the Counsellor-General read, by the open window, his *Bénédiction de Dieu dans la Solitude*, in an exquisite voice that seemed about to break every

moment. Liszt was stirred to his depths and felt rising within him the majestic *andante* of serenity:

> *" D'où me vient, o mon Dieu, cette paix qui m'inonde ?*
> *D'où me vient cette foi dont mon cœur surabonde ? "*

Then the artist sat down at the piano and played his *Harmonies du Soir*, dedicated to this lord of musical melancholy. But Liszt could not greatly envy a poet who had never known hope deferred or the complications of doubt. He had a vehement preference for his own free temperament. Marie was sitting with the ladies, and there was on her brow, in her face, throughout all her long, delicate body, that something which causes the anxiety and the delight of men, and sometimes their weariness.

X

"When you write the story of two happy lovers"

"WHEN you write the story of two happy lovers place them on the shores of Lake Como," Liszt wrote to Ronchaud a month after they had separated. If there was a touch of cruelty in this advice, he was himself certainly unaware of it; and this lovely landscape filled him with enthusiasm. Marie and he were established at Bellaggio, a pretty village that rises in an amphitheatre towards the middle of the lake. They had rented a villa side by side with that of Mme. Pasta, the singer. From their house they could hear the whispering of the lake. Silence for the pianists, sunsets for the poets. George's "galley-slaves" were on a voyage of love. They found and adored each other again. Never had Franz played better the nocturnes and preludes of his friend Chopin, called Chopino, called Chopinissimo. They spent evenings convincing themselves of their happiness, watching the Alpine spurs that divide the Lombard lakes, the greens of Switzerland arrested at the level of the lake by the violets of Italy. They lost themselves in each other, then outside themselves, conceiving the "supernatural harmony of the world." It was ecstasy.

During the greatest heat of the day they went and rested under the plane-trees of their Villa Melzi and read the Divine Comedy at the foot of a statue showing Dante led by Beatrice. Marie turned the pages while she ate figs ripened by the sun. Her love of *Faust* and the *Commedia* was almost a mania. They were her Bible,

her well-spring, her source of meditation, her eloquence. She talked of Florence, which she had not yet seen, but whose history she was studying ; she explained Alighieri, and Franz listened to his professor of mysticism.

" As usually happens with great souls," she said, " passion exalts in Dante the feeling for personality, with the need of excellence in all things and the virtuous desire for a glorious life. Not for an abstract, artistic glory, such as we manufacture to-day ; he wishes to feel its living ray. He loves struggle, women, religion. . . ."

" What I do not understand," interrupts Franz, " is why the poet has conceived Beatrice not as the ideal of love but as the ideal of learning. I don't like to find in this beautiful, transfigured body the mind of a learned theologian discoursing on the mysteries. Woman does not reign in man's heart by means of reasoning and demonstration. It is not her business to prove the existence of God, but to make His presence felt through love. It is in feeling, not in knowing, that her power lies. A loving woman is man's veritable guardian angel. A pedantic woman is a discord."

" Woman," Marie answers, " is never a pedant in her heart."

Three young washerwomen begin to sing, three pale beauties with wide, dark eyes, and Franz jots their melody down in his notebook. Then they set out in a boat and zigzag along the bays. In the evening they amuse themselves with fishing by torchlight. Armed with a long harpoon, the boatman spears the fish while the pinnace glides over the sleeping waters, and all about them sound the little bells of the nets. Marie is lying silent, in the stern of the boat, and Franz listens to these musical voices. She meditates, he reverberates. The *Fantaisie quasi*

Sonata entitled "After a Reading of Dante" and the *Exercices d'exécution transcendante* are the fruit of this autumn in water-colours. Marie too bears her fruit. It is another Christmas child, a second daughter, who comes into the world on December 25, 1837, and who, in memory of Como, is baptized Cosima.

As for the problem of money it was no longer so agonizing. Franz's reputation was now such that a few concerts were enough to procure the necessaries for a long time. The first Italian concert was given at the Scala in Milan. It was, in spite of all, a difficult undertaking, for the Italian public still had a perfect enjoyment only of music for the voice. Neither Hummel, nor Moscheles, nor Kalkbrenner, nor Thalberg, nor Chopin, had crossed the Alps. But the publisher Ricordi did his utmost to prepare a select audience for the pianist. Liszt became aware of this one morning at his barber's when the latter, soaping him majestically, made it plain that he knew what respect was due to "the first pianist in the world in both fantastic and inspired playing," as the papers announced.

This concert aroused astonishment and interest, but in no way interrupted the conversation going on in the boxes. He had to fall back on juggler's tricks and improvise on themes that were proposed by some dilettante and then adopted by acclamation. A bowl was placed at the entrance of the theatre in which the spectators deposited their votes. Liszt usually found *motifs* drawn from Bellini and Donizetti. Once someone proposed the cathedral of Milan. Another, the railroad. At his third concert one of the themes suggested was, "Is it better to be married or a bachelor?" Liszt harmonized and modulated undisturbed. It was thanks to

this stratagem that he imported Beethoven's Sonatas into Milan.

He revenged himself for this charlatanism at the home of the Princess Belgiojoso, in the *salons* of the Countess Samoyloff and the Countess Maffei, and at the house of Rossini, who had just retired to Milan. The wit and elegance of the composer, now at the height of his glory, charmed Liszt at a sensitive point, that of perfect politeness, to which he always responded as an artist. At this time, his Italian muse inspired him with his *Transcriptions des Soirées Musicales de Rossini* and that of the overture of *William Tell.* He loved to play in this way with other harmonies than his own and took pleasure in wearing a mask. But all this was on the surface. Deep in his heart was anxiety, the need of work, the need of realizing himself better. In a moment of despondency, he wrote to Lamennais and confided to him the recurrence of an old ache: "Will the hour for devotion and virile action never come? Am I condemned without remission to this trade of buffoon and amuser of drawing-rooms?"

In the spring of 1838, they decided to leave for Venice. This was scarcely the spot in which to find an opportunity for heroic adventure. The heavy air of the canals flung him into a new languor. He listened to the bells of the Capuchin monastery ringing for midnight mass and watched the moonlight playing over the roofs of San Marco. He went to smoke his meerschaum pipe on the Riva degli Schiavoni. He was not yet old enough to enjoy his disappointments, and yet he was already daydreaming a little about the pleasure he could find in writing a book of souvenirs, "The Great Tribulations that Accompany Small Reputations," for instance, or

"The Life of a Musician, a Long Dissonance without any Final Resolution." Dissonance: he had jotted the word down many times lately. But as soon as he stepped into the gondola with Marie, it was all changed into harmony, a soft silence, a sleep of the will, the necessity of giving himself to everything that approached him. He was not living, he was aspiring to live. Everything in him was "curiosity, desire, disquieting inspiration, the flux and reflux of contrary whims." He wore himself out in a labyrinth of passions. He felt contempt for everything that was simple and natural and was eager for difficulties; and the feeling that might have rendered him happy made him smile with scorn. The glory that his first Venetian concert brought him left him cold, for mere success no longer has any relish for those who demand superlatives in everything. This dying city was only suitable for those who were too young or too old. "The hour for self-devotion and virile action" was never sounded here. At least, so Liszt believed.

Then one morning he read in a German newspaper a detailed description of the disasters that had taken place in Hungary. Floods on the Danube had destroyed hundreds of villages and ruined thousands of their inhabitants. Help was being organized; everywhere they were opening public subscriptions. This news drew the artist out of his amorous inactivity, and the emotion he felt revealed to him for the first time the meaning of the word Fatherland. He had never given it a thought, quite sincerely believing that he had been adopted by Europe. Now a forgotten landscape rose before his eyes: Raiding, Eisenstadt, Œdenburg, the well-known forest ringing with the cries of the hunters, the swollen Danube, the pastures dotted with flocks. "O my wild

and far-off country, O my unknown friends, O my vast family, your cry of pain has called me back to you."

On April 7, Liszt set out alone for Vienna, where he planned to give two concerts for the benefit of the victims. Instead of two, he gave ten in a single month. It was enough to exhaust a greater strength than his own, but the reception accorded him by a public that had not heard him for fifteen years was such that he was impervious to all fatigue. Before these cultivated audiences he could play without fear Handel, Beethoven, Weber, Chopin, Berlioz, and his own dear *Études*, the " beloved children " that had seemed so monstrous to the habitués of la Scala. Every evening the Viennese applauded him more frantically. This is what one of his friends wrote to Schumann: " Our impressions are too new, too powerful and too unexpected for me to give you a well-considered commentary on them. The common standard is of no use here, for, even if the Colossus can be explained, that which is properly the spirit, the very breath of genius, can only be experienced, not described. Imagine a thin figure, with narrow shoulders, his hair falling over his face and down his neck, an extraordinarily spiritual face, expressive, pale, most interesting; an eye that reflects every thought, glittering in conversation or full of good will, a sharp, emphatic manner of speaking, and you have Liszt as he usually appears. When he sits down at the piano he first passes his hand through his hair, then his glance grows fixed, his breast calm; only his head and the expression of his face show the emotions he is experiencing. It is impossible to give any description of this playing; one must have heard him." The poet Saphir wrote: " Liszt knows no rules, no forms, no style. He creates his own. With him the

bizarre becomes genial, the strange comes to seem necessary, the sublime and the uncouth rub elbows, the loftiest is mingled with the most childlike, the most formidable power and the sweetest intimacy. An inexplicable apparition. . . . After the concert the victorious chief remains master of the field of battle. The conquered pianos lie scattered around him, broken strings float like trophies, wounded instruments flee in all directions, the audience look at one another, dumb with surprise, as after a sudden storm in a serene sky. And he, the Prometheus, who with each note has forged a being, his head bent, smiles strangely before this crowd that applauds him madly."

The great pianist Clara Wieck noted in her journal: "We have heard Liszt. He can be compared to no other virtuoso. He is the only one of his kind. He arouses fright and astonishment, though he is a very lovable artist. His attitude at the piano cannot be described—he is original—he grows sombre at the piano. His passion knows no limits. He often wounds one's sense of the beautiful by destroying a melody. He has a grand spirit. It can be truly said of him that his art is his life."

The Empress wished to hear him, but the Minister of Police thought it his duty to warn Her Majesty in a report that, though she might invite him to court, it would be premature to honour him with the title of a royally and imperially licensed artist "because of his relations with Mme. Dudevant, a follower of the dangerous Abbé de Lamennais and the author of several works of a very pernicious spirit published under the pseudonym of George Sand. The said Liszt was also carrying on a liaison with the Countess d'Agoult, who

had just given birth to a child in Lombardy. It was true that neither during his stay in Milan nor since he had been in Vienna had he made any expression of his political opinions. But he was frivolous and vain and affected the fantastic manners of the young Frenchmen of to-day, and, save for his value as an artist, he seemed to be an insignificant young man."

Nevertheless, he played before Their Majesties and won the sympathies of all. What aroused him specially was his growing friendship for Clara Wieck, whom he had just met and who revealed to him the talent of her future husband, Robert Schumann. The *Carnival* and the *Fantasiestücke*, which the latter sent him, at once aroused his greatest interest. He played them with delight, spoke of them to all comers, and had them put on his programmes. Chopin and Schumann were now his favourites.

He had scarcely sent off to his Hungarian fellow-countrymen the fruits of his labours—25,000 gulden—when Marie sent word that she was ill. Liszt prepared immediately to leave. All his Viennese friends, artists, painters, noblemen, among them Clara Wieck, his old master Czerny, and many of his former Hungarian patrons, gathered at the Hôtel de la Ville-de-Francfort to give him a farewell dinner. At dawn they were still celebrating. Then they accompanied the young great man as far as Neudorf, in the outskirts of the capital. And the red and yellow coach, with the postilion sounding the horn, resumed the road to Italy.

Marie, already convalescent, was awaiting him at Venice, and as the climate no longer agreed with her they decided on the spot to pack up and settle at Lugano. But once they were there, still other irritations set Franz's

nerves on edge. Ever since he had been exercising his wit in the *Gazette Musicale*, his articles had found only too many echoes. And the one that he had just consecrated to la Scala and Italian music brought down a storm about his head.

First, anonymous letters began to rain on him. A frontal attack followed in three newspapers: "War on Franz Liszt." And there were reproaches for ingratitude, insults, outbursts of indignant nationalism. Liszt denied vehemently that he had had any intention of inflicting wounds; he had spoken only as an artist and a competent judge. He was vituperated all the more. He lost his temper and left Lugano in a rage to face his assailants in Milan. But first he sent this open letter to the editors of the principal dailies:

"Monsieur, the invectives and insults in the newspapers continue. As I have already said, I shall not enter into a war of pens. If it followed the tone which the *Pirate* and the *Courrier des Théâtres* have adopted, this could be nothing but an exchange of scurrilities. I am even less able to reply to anonymous abuse. Therefore I declare for the hundredth and last time that it was never my intention to outrage Milanese society. I also declare that I am quite ready to give anyone who asks me for them all the necessary explanations. Believe me, etc."

"Friday morning, July 20 (1838),
Hotel de la Bella Venezia."

After this he had himself driven about the streets in an open carriage in order to announce his presence unmistakably; then, returning to the hotel, he awaited events with arms folded. But no one troubled to pick up the glove flung down by the beautiful hand of the pianist.

XI

The Tower of Pisa

THERE is a whole family of minds who find their true life only among the dead, who, in order to create, invent or press forward, must first tread well-tried paths. The new is for them a fresh flower on an old tree, a spring-time in the hoary old apple-tree of the understanding. Let us put it thus: love is better than pride. Liszt belongs to the race of poets among whom thought is the strongest expression of love. As with Goethe, Italy became the intellectual fatherland of his emotions. "Italy's sorrow will always be the sorrow of fine souls," he said. And he added an incentive to each of his journeys by planning to visit some masterpiece.

In Florence, coming away from Prince Poniatowsky's ball at two o'clock in the morning, into the clear Tuscan night, he passed under the galleries of the Uffizi and, turning towards the Piazza della Signoria, stopped at the foot of the Perseus of Benvenuto Cellini. "Perseus," he meditated dreamily, "is one of those glorious champions who have remained conquerors in the struggle between good and evil. He is the man of genius, that mixed being born of intercourse between a god and a mortal. His first steps in life are combats. He kills the Gorgon, he cuts off the head of Medusa, the inert force, the brutal obstacle that always rises between a powerful man and the accomplishment of his destiny. He throws himself upon the winged horse, he masters his genius; he delivers Andromeda; he goes forth to marry beauty, the eternal mistress of the poet; but this

will not be without fresh combats. The struggle begins again, and, since Perseus is the son of woman, since he is more man than god, he is subject to error. Fatality resumes its rights. He kills the father of Danaë: sorrow and remorse weigh upon his brow. He is killed in his turn by Megapenthe. . . . After his death the nations raise altars to him. The primordial idea. Truth eternally true! Clothing first the most abstract form of art, it reveals itself in words. Poetry lends it her language; she symbolizes it. In Perseus, antiquity gives us a profound and complete allegory. It is the first stage, the first step in the development of the idea."

At Bologna, he went straight to the museum, traversed without pausing three rooms full of Guidos, Guercinos and Carraccis, and reserved himself entirely for Raphael's Saint Cecilia. This picture immediately appealed to his soul in a double aspect: first, as an expression of all that is most noble and ideal in the human form, then as the complete symbol of the art to which he had dedicated his life. The poetry and the philosophy of the work were as visible to him as its ideal beauty. The painter has caught the moment when Saint Cecilia is about to sing; she is going to celebrate the glory of God, the expectation of the just, the hope of the sinner. Her soul trembles like that of David when he touched the strings of his harp. Her eyes are suddenly flooded with light, her ears with harmony; the clouds open, the ecstatic eyes of the virgin are lifted to heaven and space rings with hosannas. To the right of Saint Cecilia, Raphael has placed Saint John, "the most excellently perfect type of the tried human affections," consecrated by religion and sorrow. On the other side is Mary Magdalen, love again, but born of the senses and

attached to visible beauty. Besides, she is somewhat in the background, as if to show that she participates only in the second degree in the divine essence of music, and that "her ear is captivated by the sensuous charm of sounds more than her heart is penetrated by supernatural emotion." In the foreground is Saint Paul, in an attitude of profound meditation. Clearly, what he finds in music is always eloquence; what he sees in it is instruction through intuition, which is also a form of preaching, less obvious, but with an equal power to attract hearts and deeds to the hidden truth. Behind the saint, finally, Augustine seems to listen more coldly. His face is serious and sad. It is that of a man who has erred for many years, who has often transgressed and is on his guard against even the most sacred emotions.

These four personages grouped about Harmony thus seemed to Franz the very types of his art, summing up its essential elements.

But it was at Rome, through Michael Angelo and the music of the Sistine Chapel, that he had the complete revelation. Here art appears in its unity and universality. What he had glimpsed through his initiation by Lamennais took concrete form and found expression. His feeling and his reflection penetrated further every day into the secret relation that unites all works of genius. "Raphael and Michael Angelo help me to understand Mozart and Beethoven better," he wrote to Berlioz. "Giovanni Pisano, Fra Angelico, Francia, explain to me Allegri, Marcello and Palestrina; Titian and Rossini seem to me like two stars with similar rays. The Coliseum and the Campo Santo are not as foreign as they seem to the *Heroic Symphony* and the *Requiem*. Dante found his pictorial expression in Orcagna and Michael

Angelo; perhaps he will some day find his musical expression in the Beethoven of the future."

M. Ingres, director of the Ecole de Rome, became his intimate friend and took him to see the Vatican Gallery. Together they reviewed the marbles and the frescoes. Ingres talked all the time as he walked, and his words gave the masterpieces a more intelligible life. Liszt felt that a "whole mystery of poetry was being fulfilled" in him. They sat down beneath the pines of the Villa Medici and had a heart-to-heart talk. Then the young man led the master to the piano. "Come," he said, "don't let us forget our beloved music. The violin is waiting for you. The sonata and the minor mode grow weary on the shelf. Let us begin."

"Ah, if you had heard him then! With what religious faithfulness he rendered Beethoven's music! With what firmness and warmth he handled the bow! What purity of style, what truth of feeling! In spite of the respect he inspires in me, I could not help flinging my arms about his neck, and I was happy to feel that he returned my embrace with an almost fatherly affection."

From this first stay in Rome sprang the *Three Sonnets of Petrarch*, then two fine descriptive pieces for the piano, *Spozalizio* and *Il Pensiero*, one inspired by Raphael's *Wedding at Cana*, the other by Michael Angelo's portrait of Lorenzo di Medici. He had been minded to write them for some time. Goethe speaks somewhere of the eye that feels and the hand that sees: Liszt in turn expressed himself by a listening eye and a seeing heart. It was because he wished to remain faithful to his inner life that he finished at Rome his transcriptions of Beethoven's Symphonies. Rome meant for him a great intellectual advance and a new expansion of the heart, the

ruin of bookish philosophies, but the genesis of the maturities of the soul.

His lodgings were situated in the Via delle Purificazione: was this a symbol? A third child was born there, a son this time, and he called him Daniel. In the evening he would play for Blandine the *Scenes from Childhood* of Schumann or amuse himself with his black greyhound. He took up again his mystical theology and went to mass at dawn, then to the Sistine Chapel, where he would play on the organ everything he could find of Palestrina, Allegri, and Vittoria. If the man was not happy, at least the artist was beginning to bear fruit.

Marie would scrutinize the knitted forehead that was darkly hostile; and, as she was always clear-sighted, she calmly analysed what Franz was afraid to confess to himself. The lover's senses no longer thrilled to love, but love had settled like a disease in the brain of the mistress. An immense pride kept it repressed. But its power for grief or reproach escaped sometimes in spite of herself in a glance or a jealous word. Some invitation addressed to the artist alone by a great Roman lady, an allusion to her irregular situation, was enough to bring on, not exactly a scene, but a bitter misunderstanding. There were no longer mutual explanations, only silence. They did not quarrel and become reconciled; they judged each other. "Reason," thought Marie, "when it intervenes so late in desperate situations, helps not to cure the ill, but only to sound its depths." Each believed he was more clear-sighted and less egotistical than the other. Marie did not know that an artist demands liberty even in love; and Franz was unaware that wounded pride can stifle tenderness in a woman.

A mere nothing set them on edge and they became

ironical with each other. She wished to prevent him from going to the drawing-rooms whither he was continually invited, but he did not wait for her permission. She worked, she wrote, she concealed the suffering of her pride. Often, when he returned late, he found her still studying by the lamp. She kept up her journal. He discovered it in her bureau one day, and sneered at an eloquence against which he armed himself with cruelty: "O my grief, be strong and calm; bury yourself so deeply in my soul that no one, not even *he*, shall hear your weeping. O my pride, close my lips for ever; seal my soul with a triple seal. What I have said, no one has understood; what I have felt, no one has guessed. He whom I have loved has penetrated only the surface of my love. Dante, Beatrice . . ."

He tossed away the book and turned to Marie: "Bah! Dante! Beatrice! It is the Dantes who make the Beatrices, and the real ones die at eighteen!"

Was it the feverish Roman summer that poisoned them against each other? They fled to Lucca, from Lucca to Pisa, from Pisa to San Rossore, a fishing village on the seashore. From there, Franz looked at the almost imperceptible black spot of the isle of Elba. He dreamed of Napoleon; then of that other solitary, Beethoven. Just then the papers brought the news that the French share of a public subscription for a monument of Beethoven at Bonn amounted only to 424 francs 90 centimes. Liszt was furious with indignation. "What a disgrace to every one! What an affliction for us!" Very well, he would pay for defaulting France. He seized his pen and wrote to his friend, the sculptor Bartolini, in Florence, asking him what sum would be necessary for such a monument and how much time he would need to com-

plete it. Bartolini replied that he would require two years and 60,000 francs for the marble. Liszt informed the committee at Bonn that he would guarantee this sum. Marie looked at him, a little frightened, but with admiration.

"Sixty thousand francs! Can you think of it?"

"Three concerts, in Vienna, Paris, and London, will suffice," he assured her.

Then they both went to mass in the cathedral at Pisa. Marie felt clearly that the "indefatigable vagabond," as Berlioz called him, was going to escape from her for a long time. And on their return to the chalet at San Rossore her journal received this confidence: "Our life is like the tower of Pisa. We begin it with audacity and certainty, we desire it to be lofty and upright; but all at once the earth on which we built crumbles beneath us. Our will fails; we believe that all is lost. Let us then remember Bonnano Pisano, and do as he did; let us first prop up our soul, and then make due allowance for our faults. But let us go on, go on; let us not dread trouble and sorrow; let us consummate our bending life, so that at least those who judge us must wonder if it was not better so, and whether a more complete perfection might not perhaps have been less admirable."

XII

The most adorable Lover in the World and the most genial Pianist

WHILE Marie and the three children returned to Paris and established themselves with Mme. Liszt, Franz went to Vienna. The huge Haslinger, his impresario, received him on the threshold with a wide smile. Not a single seat was left for any of the six concerts that had been announced. They had already refused six hundred applications from the Viennese, all of whom wished to see the most adorable lover in the world and the greatest genius of the piano. It was not enthusiasm, but a sort of collective passion that greeted the appearance on the platform of this tall, smooth-shaven young man of twenty-eight, in his green dress-coat with its metal buttons and his pearl-grey trousers, holding his hat in his hand. He bowed and cast a serious glance over this audience of three thousand persons, in the centre of which, in his box of crimson velvet, sat the Emperor. No one could have described the spell that fell upon the audience when the artist placed his fingers on the keys. He was like that devil of a Paganini. The feeling, the skill, the depths of song, the thought, the spirit, the style, the power, the will, gifts each of which, at such a degree of perfection, could alone have made the glory of a virtuoso, were all united so naturally in Liszt that no one dreamed of noticing them. One forgot everything, the piano, the art, the man ; one knew oneself only in a wild drive to lose one's soul. As for Franz, he did not even see this enchanted crowd to whom he

spoke, all unawares, of the gardens of Lombardy, the monuments of Rome, or the grief of Dante. A poetry that is fixed, and therefore limited, is the ransom which the painter, the writer, the sculptor, pay for the duration of their works ; but the power of the virtuoso lies in a creation that is constantly renewed, that takes shape for the aristocratic delight of a moment. Perhaps Liszt listened to himself with as much surprise as his audience. And not infrequently he played over again, as an encore, the same piece, transposed into so different a register of the soul that this public of famous amateurs did not recognize it.

Amid these soirées at Vienna, he thought of his Hungarian fatherland and began to plan for the return of a prodigal son who would go home with his hands full. One evening a deputation had come to him from Pest to transmit to him an invitation in the name of that capital. He accepted, and began his journey by way of Presbourg, which he always associated with the memory of the first concert he had ever given, more than twenty years earlier. The old city had reserved for Liszt one of those receptions which the cities of Tuscany gave to their glorious sons in the days when their heroic qualities were better expressed in the persons of artists than in those of princes. The moment his carriage had crossed the bridge over the Danube, the crowd, massed along the road, greeted him with cries of " Eljen, eljen Franz Liszt ! " and escorted him with music and delegates at its head.

Three days later, on December 24, these popular demonstrations were even greater when he arrived at the palace of his friend Count Festetics at Pest. A whole orchestra awaited him there, assisted by the most famous

men's chorus in Hungary. A complete poem was sung, the music and words of which had been especially composed for this welcome. He was received, in short, like a visiting monarch, and the Hungarian nobility clubbed together to give him a sword of honour, encrusted with precious stones. This weapon was for long the laughing-stock of the European newspapers, from the *Times* to the *Charivari*. The following quatrain, placed beneath a caricature of the artist, made a fortune:

"Liszt alone, of all warriors, is without reproach,
For, in spite of his big sword, we know that this hero
Has vanquished only semi-quavers
And slain only pianos."

But the slayer of pianos was about to inoculate his fellow-countrymen with a national fever, for this Parisian from Italy had discovered how to glorify gipsy music. He ended his first concert with a transposition of the *Rakoczy-Marche* which electrified the crowd. Twenty thousand enthusiasts formed a torchlight procession and carried him off in triumph. He had to address the mob in French (he had forgotten Hungarian, and he did not yet know enough German), he was made an honorary citizen of Budapest, and was even granted presently a title of nobility by His Majesty.

But Liszt had been familiar for too long with this kind of powerful emotion, and his ability to enjoy it had been deadened. These apotheoses bored him, for he had expected this journey to be a sort of quiet spiritual refreshment, and he had planned to return and take his own measure in this countryside of Raiding into which he had put down such slight roots. He did not succeed, however, in making his pilgrimage in solitude. The noise of his coming had been enough for the little village

to declare a holiday, and the mayor, the schoolteacher and many peasants rode on horseback before the Prodigal Son. They killed the fatted calf in the public square and danced, while Liszt visited the house where he was born, inhabited now by a game-warden. He recognized all the odours of his childhood, the corner where the piano had stood, the places on the walls where the engravings had hung, his parents' room. Sad and deeply stirred, he went into the church to collect himself and pray while the village kept silence and joined with the artist in his simple and somewhat theatrical faith.

When he came out he saw that, as of old, a great troop of gipsies had arrived that very day, perhaps by coincidence, though the old schoolmaster may have had something to do with it. Their orchestra had established itself in a neighbouring wood of oaks, and already the air was ringing with " Elgen Liszt Ferencz ! " When twilight fell, they lighted about the clearing a dozen barrels of pitch, from which the flames rose as straight as pillars of fire. In the centre of this Shakespearean setting stood the gipsy girls, dazzling, half naked, their tambourines lifted. At the first clash of the cymbals they sprang forward with cries—all but the most beautiful one. Motionless, but tense as a nervous mare, she sang in a deep alto voice, her eyes fixed on Liszt's :

" Do not fall in love, poor heart ; you will stream with bitterness as my scythe streams with the juice of the grasses.

" The most beautiful girls are changeable ; their promises are like the larks : they greet the spring, then fly away."

She assumed voluptuous poses and distilled through her eyes the appeals of a body that already arched itself

to meet the man's caressing glances. It was her way of proposing the "bonne aventure." That night Franz found that the epithet was not deceptive.

It was at Leipzig, in the celebrated hall of the Gewandhaus, that Liszt met with his first defeat as an artist. Too extravagant advertising, along with the refusal of free tickets, had predisposed the most musically cultivated public in Germany against a performer who carried off such noisy triumphs. Leipzig was jealous of its position as a sort of supreme court that never ratified on trust the feather-brained verdicts of the capitals. Moulded by its famous Conservatory, firmly planted on its own tradition, regulated, somewhat rigidly, by its Bach and Beethoven societies, the city resolved to pass Liszt through the sieve of its erudition. So the audience showed itself first cold, then deliberately hostile. There were even hisses after his transposition of the *Pastoral.*

This setback made him ill. He went to bed and had his second concert put off for several days, but was consoled for this annoyance by the friendship of two men who came to pass whole days at his bedside, Schumann and Mendelssohn. With Schumann, especially, it was as if they had known each other for twenty years. This taciturn poet could remain for hours beside Liszt, often without saying a word. Mendelssohn talked enough for two; and, while the latter ran on, Franz would sink into his own thoughts or write to Marie. Then, after an infinity of time, a massive personage would stir in the shadow where Liszt had completely forgotten him, and say, as he took his leave, "Well, we've been at it again, pouring out our hearts to each other." This abstemious talker was sometimes brutally frank, and he did not hesitate to offer criticisms on the pianistic embel-

lishments of Liszt, that famous " bravura " which he did not like at all. But as soon as Franz sat down at the piano he, like every one else, was completely won over. " Every day Liszt appears to me greater and more powerful," he confided to his Clara. And: " He played his *Noveletten* for me, a fragment of the *Fantaisies*, the *Sonata*, and he overwhelmed me. He does many things that are different from my own way of thinking, but they are always full of genius."

In spite of such champions, the pianist succeeded only in half melting the Leipzigers, so he hastened to resume his European tour. He appeared in Paris, London, Hamburg, Brussels, Baden, Frankfort, and at Bonn on the Rhine. He always played from memory; he was the first artist who had dared to do so. He invented the Recital, that is, the concert with the piano alone. He even took one more step along the road to unity by dedicating certain evenings to a single composer, Beethoven, Berlioz, or even Liszt, which seemed as daring as it was impertinent. But he was no man for beaten paths, and he always delighted in obstacles. In Paris a portion of the public still condemned him because of his liaison with Mme. d'Agoult. He compared himself to a player of écarté who plays for the fifth point. Well, this season it was " king and vole," seven points rather than five. " My two concerts alone, and especially the third at the Conservatory, for Beethoven's monument, have been beyond all comparison; they are such as I only give in Europe to-day." Calm pride, without any boasting, or rather a simple consciousness of his own quality. There was nothing unpleasant in it. Nor was there any poetic justice in the failure in England that so delighted his rivals. The Englishman is not enough of a musician

to distinguish at once between the good and the perfect. He needs practice, repetition, the opinion of the authorities. The opposite is true of the Italian, in whom bad taste is so curiously interwoven with a spontaneous feeling for genius.

The English impresario was obliged to break off the tour that was becoming ruinous both for him and for the artist. One evening, when there were only ten listeners in the concert-hall, Liszt invited them all to his hotel, where he had an ample supper brought in, and played through for them his entire programme. He then returned to London, very happily, for his company was eagerly sought there by two hosts of distinction: Lady Blessington, a celebrated beauty and ardent woman who showed a marked inclination for the artist, and the famous Count d'Orsay. Marie had no doubt suspected something, for she came to London to rejoin her lover at the very moment when he could best have done without her surveillance. But he knew how to be generous, especially now when the English aristocracy was visiting its Biblical censure on the great lady and her irregular situation. Liszt one evening seized the opportunity to put a stop to their disagreeable whispers. He happened to be at Count d'Orsay's. Someone who was speaking of the Countess turned to Liszt for a competent opinion. "My opinion of Mme. d'Agoult?" he replied. "If she were to tell me to fling myself out of that window, I should at once do so. That is my opinion of the Countess." This was in the style of a Parisian of the great period, and the Count smiled as an appreciative connoisseur. It was also typical of Liszt, who delighted in the grand style and was always human in the direct and living sense of the word. And, finally,

it savoured of ostentation, for which he had the same taste as Goethe and Rubens. He cultivated a weakness for a fine gesture, appeasing his pride with his good-heartedness. Thus he loved to give, even to squander, always with open hands. One had to be truly clumsy to escape his kindnesses.

This, however, was exactly the case with a young German, two years his junior, who was living in the direst poverty in Paris, where he was transcribing his "arrangements" of Donizetti's music for the publisher Schlesinger. He had come to see Liszt at his hotel upon the recommendation of a common friend. Although he had arrived early in the morning, several gentlemen were already waiting, talking among themselves. Liszt soon appeared in an elegant dressing-gown, and the conversation turned on his recent tour in Hungary. The German, who understood nothing of this, was rather bored. At last the great man came up to him and asked him in a friendly way how he might serve him. But the stranger seemed to have forgotten that he was hungry; all he could think of mentioning was his desire to know him. Liszt promised to send him a ticket for the Beethoven recital at the Conservatory, and the German left without having been able to explain himself. When he had gone, Liszt glanced at the unknown's visiting-card; then he handed it to his secretary Belloni for him to make a note of it in his address-book. The latter wrote: "M. Richard Wagner, rue du Helder."

XIII

Harvested Loves

LISZT was almost painfully sensitive to the graces of a face. Every face was to him a soul. There is a promise in glances, in some a promise like that of love. One of the purest faces he had ever seen was that of the young prince who, after a concert at Brussels, came straight up with an offer of friendship. He was Felix Lichnowsky, nephew of that Charles Lichnowsky who had been so faithful to Beethoven. They took to each other at once, and their affection became so exacting that the two young men were never out of each other's company. As Felix, who had not yet inherited his immense property, was in financial difficulties, Liszt had the joy of lending him ten thousand francs. They went together to Paris, to London, and up the Rhine. Passing through the neighbourhood of Bonn, they visited the little island of Nonnenwerth, where, according to a German legend, Roland of Roncesvalles died of love. An old, half-ruined convent, a chapel, were all that remained to recall the poetry of this floating grave. Liszt was so enchanted by it that he rented it and would even have liked to own it. They hastened to send Marie the news. "We have many beautiful years still ahead of us," he wrote encouragingly. "Did I say *still*? It seems to me that they should be the only beautiful years, pure, tender, restful, indefinite. If my doctrines are as abominable as you say, my dreams are sublime. . . . You were not mistaken, Marie: we are not each other's masters. *If we do not attain happiness, it may be because*

we are worthy of something better. Why should it matter what we are forced to be, if, at moments, it is given us to feel what we are capable of being, what we are before God and in each other?"

She arrived with the children at the beginning of summer as the two friends were hastily placing in the half-destroyed old convent what furniture they could pick up. It was the first time they had had a real home since their days in Rome. And what a home it was! —an island where no one lived but a few fishermen, friends of the Loreleis, and a handful of nuns, perhaps, at their prayers, sirens also. The Seven Mountains protected this mediæval hermitage with its tolling bell. And at night, over the waters of the pagan river, echoed the new attempts of the composer, the *Roi de Thulé*, *Feuilles d'Album*, *La Tombe et la Rose*.

Cologne was not far distant. Ten times they visited its cathedral, still unfinished, for which a public subscription had once more been opened. And Liszt wrote: "I don't know why, but the sight of a cathedral always moves me strangely. Is it because music is an architecture of sound or because architecture is crystallized music? I don't know, but certainly there exists a close relationship between these two arts. I too shall contribute my artist's mite towards the completion of the cathedral."

The people of the Rhineland received the news with joy, and towards the end of August there was a two-days' festival such as these rich vine-growers love: houses covered with flowers, villas full of merriment, guns, an illumination, and on Liszt's steamboat three hundred and fifty choristers singing the praises of the wine and of the plump red-faced girls with their straining corsets.

Between Marie and Franz matters were not growing any better. Their only bond was the children. George Sand's saying, " galley-slaves," now assumed a dreadful meaning, for no law could intervene to liberate them. A servitude that is not conditioned by any social duty and that springs only from the phantom of love is, just because of its gratuitousness, the most insupportable of all chains. How could they help hating each other, these slaves condemned to happiness? And if Franz had declared his willingness to throw himself from a window in order to give the measure of his feeling, it was because this leap would have put an elegant end to a poem that was threatening to stop short. The worst of it was that both of these despairing hearts were fully determined to live. We picture them already heavy with the future. " I ask you for a magic that will endure," says Obermann. " You give me a bond in which I can see the naked iron of endless slavery beneath these flowers of a day with which you have clumsily covered them. . . . I ask for a magic that will change or revive my life." The unreasonable demand of this Senancour, who had been a sort of master of their emotional life at Geneva, became their own. Yet the magic they demanded they had in part already, since Franz had his glory as an artist and Marie her success as a beautiful woman. To them these things were mere counterfeit wealth. Franz's mistress was rumoured to be having other love affairs. He did not seek to know the truth, but he dreamed of finding a new inspiration for himself. So they parted in the autumn, without many regrets, she to return to Paris, he to begin a whole season of concerts in Berlin.

Twenty-one concerts in two months, a cycle in the

course of which he interpreted almost all that was essential in pianistic literature, from Bach to Berlioz: this was the schedule that turned the Prussian capital upside down. King Frederick William IV, the Crown Prince, the princesses, did nothing but go to concerts, and the square in front of the Hôtel de Russie, where the artist stayed, was black with people all day long. Such is the prestige of a glory-crowned face. And yet this prestige "changed" and "revived" nothing. Liszt's soul remained disastrously empty. The more demonstrations there were of those simplified love-affairs that make up public enthusiasm, the more it seemed as if the man's heart were turning to steel. Ladies kissed his hands, wore his portrait in a brooch, or clawed each other tearing off his gloves; some even brought a small flask to the assemblies at which he appeared and poured into it what he left in the bottom of his teacup; others stole the cigars he had smoked. He despised these sensual travesties of the forget-me-not. They even stirred in him a loathing for mere animal pleasure.

One evening, at the royal palace, to which he was constantly invited, he was presented to Charlotte de Hagn, the most beautiful and talented of German actresses. This blonde Bavarian, with her merry eyes, the curls that framed the lovely oval of her face, and her reputation for wit, made a bright spot among the stilted ladies of the court. Franz and she were at once in sympathy, They had common friends: Rachel, Alexandre Dumas, Émile de Girardin. She spoke French with the least hint of a delicious accent. They were mutually charmed and were already closely observing each other, as future lovers do. At their next meeting Charlotte wrote on

a corner of her fan a little poem she had composed for him :

" Poète, ce qu'est l'amour, ne me le cache pas.
L'amour, c'est le souffle de ton âme suave.
Poète, ce qu'est un baiser, apprends-le-moi.
Écoute : plus il est bref, plus ton péché est grave."

Franz carried off the fan and set this avowal to music. The adventure amused him and the peacock displayed all his feathers in order to speed on the conclusion. . . . (Seven years later, Charlotte was still able to write to him : " You have spoiled all other men for me. No one can stand the comparison. You are and remain the only one.")

But this beautiful feminine distraction did not prevent Franz from attaching himself almost more lovingly to a woman of fifty-seven who was living in retirement in Berlin, meditating on her past : Bettina von Arnim. The extraordinary richness of soul of this friend of Goethe's and Beethoven's fascinated Liszt, who spent hours at her house listening to her talk. With the keenness of insight that had enabled her to perceive the majesty of Beethoven before most of her contemporaries, she foresaw in this young man the musician of importance, the probable great composer. This was her specialty. She addressed him familiarly, gave him his place at once in the ranks of the masters, delighted him with her precious correspondence. " In whatever way you touch me, you awake in me the need of making myself better, the desire for striving that one feels in the first enchantments of life. To be an artist—what is it but to feel time ripening within you ? What is the omen that blossoms along your path ? Youth. May it be the

only mediator of your immortality! Enthusiasm is nothing if it does not protect the welfare of the man, if it does not become a living spring of health. You need have no care for yourself. You do not demand happiness or expect much of the future. What is it then that you need? Look, all about you are others full of longings, needs, demands, wasting their time in useless struggles for ephemeral blessings. Are they blessings? No, they are nothing but emptiness and vanity. But you who have bathed your soul in the wells of harmony, in what else can you put your trust but in Nature, the daughter of heaven and earth? You must capture the world-spirit, it must rise out of you. . . . You know well enough that of the many who have applauded you only a few have understood you. But the young have divined the holy ardour of your genius. I wish you all good. I am fond of you. The times have watered me with their fertilizing showers. In me there sprout and grow the hidden seeds of the highest power. Rejoice. Ask nothing else from Fate than the power to reveal to the young the enchanted world of the heroes."

So exulted once more this ageing personage who had revived Goethe and Beethoven in the same way thirty years earlier. And Liszt preferred her faded voice to the livelier solicitations of the young women of Berlin. Charlotte attracted him less than Bettina. Yes, through this straightforward and still beautiful little lady his soul was stirred to the height of the old lion who said: "When two such men as Goethe and myself are together, the world must feel our grandeur." They had remained together in her heart, which was dedicated to the worship of both. It sometimes happens that a young man gives

more love to these exemplary heroes than to the little palpitating idols of pleasure.

It was in a coach drawn by six white horses, followed by thirty carriages, each with four horses, and an escort of students in costume, that Liszt left Berlin. As Bettina had predicted, he had been crowned king of the youth that was rendering him these honours. A significant spectacle, that of the son of the Esterhazys' steward, clad in this royal purple, while Lichnowsky, at his side, looked like a subaltern. A king of Prussia stood at the window to watch the cavalcade of the elected monarch go by. People elect genius, which for itself perhaps never gives the matter a thought.

In his travelling coach, rolling now towards St. Petersburg and Moscow by way of Warsaw, Liszt had carried Shakespeare with him as a companion for his journey. This is the way the self-taught take their revenge on the scholars. They suddenly need a great spiritual battery to recharge them anew, and they absorb from a neighbouring art whatever supplements their powers. Delacroix said: "The time given to a concert, as long as it contains a single good piece, must never be looked upon as an interruption. It is the best of nourishment for the soul." It was thanks to *King Lear* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, perhaps, that at Warsaw Liszt enchanted the Poles and revealed to them the poetry of Chopin.

In Russia, where he had to spend the whole of this spring of 1842, he found little to please him, in spite of his triumphs as a virtuoso. The enormous sums he earned were spent at once or distributed in charity. This was a kind of need of his nature. The elegance with which he surrounded himself was also beginning

to be expensive. He had a travelling coach built according to his own design and fitted up like the caravan of a gipsy king. It became, at his pleasure, a drawing-room, a dining-room or a bed-chamber. In addition to his valet, he engaged a footman to trim his beard and tie his three hundred and sixty cravats. Not the least of his expenses was the court of admirers who followed him from city to city and whom he entertained at banquets with tireless good nature. Among these followers were women dressed as boys.

During these years of travel Marie and Franz never saw each other for any length of time except during vacations in their Rhenish retreat of Nonnenwerth. They no longer cherished any illusions; they knew that the end of their romance was approaching. For some time Mme. d'Agoult had been preparing to return to the world. Thanks to her accomplishments, the influence of her friends, her brother's generosity, she felt the moment approaching when she might reappear on the stage. Not, of course, quite to resume her old part, but to play a more interesting, a less conventional rôle, the rôle of one of those victims of love who can always count upon so many sympathies, even so many emotions. Since her mother had died, she had a large fortune at her command which would facilitate matters. Moreover, if her taste for passion was fading, she was still surrounded by the faithful Ronchaud, the painter Lehmann and a few other adorers who were quite ready to teach her how to enjoy more moderate pleasures. With the sureness of intuition that had always served her so well, she felt the approach of the psychological moment when it would be easy for her to replace the ardour of

the senses by that of the spirit. She wrote a good deal, and a touch of intellectual snobbishness guided her towards a political liberalism of a fairly vivid hue. This was a way of expressing her scorn for those who had scorned her. The woman of letters had been born in her through these successive emancipations. She had already published a short tale and several articles under the pen-name of Daniel Stern. With her head full of the prophecies of Mlle. Lenormant, she was preparing two large works, an *Essay on Liberty* and a novel, *Nélida*. Her own romance, of course. A double method of liberating oneself in the fashion of the Goethean therapeutic. There was no more determined amateur of intellectual hygiene. Franz had said in the old days: "Hers is less encumbered with useless baggage than any intelligence I know," and this was certainly true. Nothing could ever soften this sharp face. At Florence she had noted down in her journal, before Fra Angelico's frescoes at San Marco: "A naïve grace lies in these inventions of ecstatic painting; the lines are pure, the tones harmonious, but true beauty is not in them because humanity is absent from them. A most agreeable art has grouped these figures in a charming symmetry, but it is an art that quickly wearies you because you feel that it is not free and that it is incapable of any development. In our admiration for Fra Beato we feel the glorious impotence of an imagination nourished on ecstasy." Here is one of the keys of this logical brain: she could make nothing of ecstasy. Heavens, how unromantic this romantic woman was! The truth was that she lacked imagination, a certain enthusiasm. She had often smiled at George Sand and her heavy, rustic, humanitarian poetry. For example, when the

novelist dedicated her *Simon* to her in the following fashion:

"Mysterious friend, be the patron of this poor tale.
Patrician, pardon the antipathies of the rustic story-teller.
Madame, tell no one that you are her sister.
Thrice noble heart, stoop to her and make her proud.
And may you be pardoned for it, Countess.
Hidden star, recognize yourself in these litanies—"

Marie, who had so sure a taste, replied by dedicating her *Julien* to the comrade of other days:

"I cannot but write your name at the head of this little sketch. I promised myself to do so in a time that is irrevocably past. To-day, Madame, you will not even guess that name which I forbear to speak and which was once so dear to me. Life passes in vain efforts and still vainer regrets. We wished to love each other."

While Arabella was experiencing her precocious maturity, Franz continued to follow his fancy. He had made his tour of Spain, given concerts in Paris, and returned again to the roads of Germany. There was always some siren at his heels, for how could he resist them?

One evening, happening to be in Dresden, he was most anxious to hear *Rienzi*, by the new conductor of the orchestra at the opera-house who had called upon him several years before in Paris. Upon his entreaty, the director consented to give a special performance. Liszt, who was so quick to appreciate the new, recognized at once the genius in this crowded but brilliant score; and when, during the *entr'acte*, Wagner came up into the box of the tenor Tichatschek, Liszt, still shaken by this new musical thunderbolt, frankly showed his emotion. The two men gripped hands warmly. But Wagner withdrew almost at once, for in the box there was a woman who was almost too beautiful and

too elegantly dressed, who seemed to look at him with insolent eyes. It was the dancer Lola Montes, the pianist's latest adorer.

With the ardour of her half-Irish, half-Andalusian nature, she had fallen in love with Liszt and had been his companion for several weeks. Liszt allowed her to make love to him and amused himself with this dangerous sweetheart. But without any conviction, without any real curiosity. She annoyed, she irritated him during his hours of work. Before long, he planned to escape, and, having arranged everything with the hotel porter, he departed without leaving any address, but not without having first locked this most wearisome of inamoratas up in her room. For twelve hours Lola raised a fearful uproar, breaking whatever she could lay her hands on. It had been paid for in advance. But she felt no rancour. On the contrary, shortly after, when she had replaced the artist by the King of Bavaria (who almost made her queen), she wrote to Franz, gracefully offering him the handsomest decoration in the kingdom to wear over his heart.

This adventure made a stir. It came to the ears of Mme. d'Agoult. She seized upon this pretext to break with Liszt and, more in memory of herself than of her lover, composed this poetic epitaph:

" *Non, tu n'entendras pas, de sa lèvre trop fière,*
Dans l'adieu déchirant un reproche, un regret.
Nul trouble, nul remords pour ton âme légère
En cet adieu muet.

Tu croiras qu'elle aussi, d'un vain bruit enivrée,
Et des larmes d'hier oublieuse demain,
Elle a d'un ris moqueur rompu la foi jurée
Et passé son chemin.

Et tu ne sauras pas qu'implacable et fidèle,
Pour un sombre voyage elle part sans retour ;
Et qu'en fuyant l'amant dans la nuit éternelle
Elle emporte l'amour."

"Pride, merely pride," he thought. "In all her learning there is no love of anything but attitudes. It was Liszt to whom she wished to hold fast ; but as for myself, Franz, if I were to cast off to-morrow this dazzling mantilla, what should I be to her ? Oh, what an unpleasant surprise to find only a heart instead of a famous man ! "

One or two letters were exchanged between them ; and then, since everything was ripe for it so to be, this harvested love dropped gently into the basket of the past.

XIV

A Monument to Beethoven

In the course of these last years of travel, let us note three stages that fix three important moments in the life of Liszt: Pau, Bonn, and Weimar. Pau witnessed the gentle and long-foreseen death of his heart as a young man; Bonn, the apogee of his career as a virtuoso; Weimar, the sudden crystallization that inevitably takes place in the life of an artist, that determines the scale of its values and outlines the spiritual profile of his personality.

Franz, beginning his journey into Spain almost at the moment of his separation from Marie d'Agoult, stopped in the Pyrenees and gave a concert at Pau. For him, it was not just one town more on his list. He had marked it with a cross; for in the neighbourhood lived Caroline d'Artigaux, who had been Caroline de Saint-Cricq, and after sixteen years his heart had not yet completely learned to do without her. When he came out on the concert-stage he saw her at once, seated in the second row.

The next day he hired a carriage, and, driving through the autumn fields, paid her a visit. Sixteen years had changed them very little. They gazed at each other, hardly able to speak, imagining what life might have been. In a flash, in the face of the impossible, the old sympathetic understanding was re-established between them. It was no surprise to him when, in her almost inaudible voice, Caroline told him that these years of waiting had been nothing but a long martyrdom, endured

with Christian resignation. Her modest body was that of a mystic virgin in which no flame burned but that of the spirit. What a Beatrice was this!—one who had really died at eighteen, as Franz had once said to Marie in a moment of irritation. The season of a Beatrice is the first spring-time of the soul; but what man has not found that in losing its taste for virtue the heart becomes blunted to all sorts of delicate enjoyments? In contrast to his own disfigured life, he saw this other, so straight, so fair, and to know that he had been its gardener filled him with poetic strength. She said: "Never grow weary of my memory." And then: "Let me always look up to you as the single bright star of my life and repeat to you my daily prayer, 'My God, reward abundantly his constant submission to Thy will.'" Such a love, the reflection of an exquisite faith, is full of strength for an artist. Caroline called the bond that united her to Liszt a "celestial fraternity," and she was so full of loving purity that she could say without sacrilege: "I guard most preciously in my heart your least as well as your greatest actions, as the Blessed Virgin kept the words of her Divine Son."

It was their last intimate meeting, and, although they did not know it, a farewell. In memory of this day, Liszt composed one of his best songs, *Ich möchte hingehn wie das Abendroth*, which he called the testament of his youth. Nearly thirty years afterwards, when she died, Franz wrote to the woman who had most completely succeeded her in his heart: "How could I help withdrawing at once into meditation and prayer when I learned of the death of Caroline d'Artigaux? She was one of the purest manifestations of God's blessing upon earth. Her long sufferings, endured with so much

Christian sweetness and resignation, had ripened her for heaven. There she enters at last into the joy of the Lord —she had no concern with that of this world, and the Infinite alone was worthy of her heavenly soul. Blessed be God for having recalled her from her earthly exile, and may her intercession obtain for us the grace to remain united to Him."

After Spain, Liszt set out for Bonn, where, on the twelfth of this August, 1845, the festival of the Beethoven monument was to take place. It brought him honours tinged with bitterness. In the first place, the committee had refused to accept Bartolini's design and had decided in favour of a very mediocre bronze by a German sculptor. He was obliged to let this pass. Then the local preparations were so niggardly that at the last moment it took all of Liszt's energy to create a setting somewhat worthy of the master. The pianist's gold once more carried the day; thanks to that, they built a handsome hall that could hold an audience of several thousand. Finally, the usual difficulties arose in regard to the text of the programme, the conducting of the orchestra and the choice of artists. But Liszt's will won its way in all essential points and he had the satisfaction of directing himself, in the presence of all musical Europe, the *Symphony in C-minor* and the last movement of *Fidelio*, and of playing the *Concerto in E-flat-major*.

The third day of the festival had been reserved for Liszt's *Cantata*, the first of his great symphonic poems. Let us note this date, not merely for the work itself, but for the history of music. Beethoven had opened the way for "programme music" with his *Pastoral* and *Ninth*. Berlioz had indicated it, in his turn, with his *Fantastique* and his *Harold en Italie*. But Liszt was the

first who had completely exploited it, and in his twelve symphonic poems he has shown the principal forms. This word should not be taken in a pictorial or literary sense. A good summing-up by Suarès explains the matter in a word: "In music, the landscape is a sentiment." In contradiction to what is said of him by hearsay, let us assert at once that Liszt was a prodigious creative genius, a very great painter of sentiments. Berlioz always proclaimed this, and he knew better than anyone else how true it was. After the performance of the *Cantate de fête* at Bonn, he wrote that Liszt had "again surpassed what had been expected from his high faculties as a composer." Saint-Saëns repeated the same thing many times. "Liszt," he said, "created the symphonic poem. This brilliant and fertile creation will be his best title to glory with posterity, and, when Time shall have effaced the shining foot-prints of the greatest pianist that ever lived, he will inscribe in his golden book the name of the emancipator of instrumental music." As for Wagner, he said: "This marvellous man can do nothing without expressing himself, without giving himself completely. He is never contented with merely reproducing. No form of activity is possible to him that is not productive; everything in him tends to pure and absolute creation."

We invoke these testimonies to fill the silence that fell upon the crowd when the innovator's wand had beaten out the last measure of his softly sung *Cantata*. It is true that three days of music and banquets had worn down the enthusiasm of both audience and performers. In addition, the king, for whom they had vainly waited for several hours, had not appeared. But he did appear precisely at this moment, and Liszt, rapping on his desk,

started at once to repeat the piece. The second performance in no way resembled the first. This time singers, soloists and orchestra were all anxious to shine. And now at last the colour and modelling of the work were apparent, and what had at first seemed grey and colourless now appeared in all its power.

Berlioz was the only one to suspect that the old struggle between the composer and the virtuoso had begun again in the soul of his friend. Twenty years of experience had indeed convinced Liszt that he must choose, and that, in order to remain faithful to himself, he must choose against his own glory. We often hear it said that half of talent consists in knowing oneself well enough to do only what one does best. Liszt believed just the opposite, not because he was a lover of obstacles, but rather as an old follower of Lamennais. "The loftiest mission of the artist," the master had said, "is to furnish the divine with modes of expression that are perpetually new." And Franz felt their urge in his heart. A few more tours that had been already promised, a few months of wanderng in the East, and he would determine to seek in seclusion a more sincere expression of himself. "The moment comes for me, *nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita*, at thirty-five, to break my chrysalis as a virtuoso and allow free flight to my thought," he wrote to the Grand Duke Karl Alexander of Saxony. "The aim that is above and beyond everything important to me at present is to conquer the theatre by my thought, as I have conquered it during these last six years by my personality as an artist."

For this double undertaking he was obliged to look far ahead and lay his plans. No spot would do better than one of those small German capitals where an affluent

prince, perhaps original, even intelligent, would offer the artist his indispensable support. And among these elegant courts of art, none was so richly suggestive to the spirit as Weimar.

Liszt had visited it for the first time in 1841, with his friend Lichnowsky, just before his stay in Berlin. He had been presented to the Grand Duchess, Marie Paulowna, the sister of the Tsar, and had given three concerts, at the end of which the enthusiastic princess had made him a present of a ring ornamented with a diamond. This ring was the symbol of the bonds that were to unite Liszt to the classic land of the German Muses.

He returned the following year to be present at the wedding festivities of the heir apparent, the Grand Duke Karl Alexander (seven years younger than himself) with Princess Sophie of the Netherlands. The Dowager Duchess at once laid before the artist her plan for attaching him permanently to Weimar for an annual season of concerts which he was to direct himself. It came at a moment when Franz was for the first time forced to consider the necessity of choosing a new basis for existence that should not be subject to the necessities of chance. No other city offered him such advantages. In this consecrated air where rose the temples of Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Wieland, it seemed, however, as if the chapel of Euterpe were lacking. No doubt this occurred to him subconsciously, for genius must have a practical vision of things. He accepted. The very next day a contract was drawn up with the Director of Theatres:

"Liszt will spend three months here every year, the months of September and October, or October and November, and lastly the month of February.

"1. He desires to have, for the concerts he arranges, the direc-

tion of the chapel orchestra, without, however, superseding M. Chélard, who will direct the orchestra on all other occasions.

" 2. Herr Liszt wishes to remain Herr Liszt for life, without accepting any other title.

" 3. As regards the financial remuneration, Herr Liszt will be satisfied with whatever sum may be thought suitable for his services during these three months.

" Written after my conversation with Herr Liszt, October 30, 1842. Herr Liszt has informed me to-day that he will accept with gratitude and pleasure the title of Kapellmeister for special services."

Liszt entered upon his duties in 1844. They were on the watch for blunders in the conductor of the orchestra. They smiled to see him lead without wand or score. But they were soon obliged to recognize that this tall awkward fellow knew by heart all the duties of a leader, caught every mistake and inspired this body of seventy-five performers with a fire of which they had not believed themselves capable. Herr Doktor Liszt had set out to make the Weimar orchestra one of the first in Germany.

Two years afterwards, during his last tour as a virtuoso, which took him across Austria and Turkey into Russia, he thought with growing ardour of this fixed star of Weimar, " the Fatherland of the Ideal where I should like some day to acquire the rights of citizenship." The wanderer felt more and more the need of taking root, the necessity of attaching himself to a tradition; perhaps he had simply acquired the taste for peaceful activity among such modest souls as Eckermann, the biographer of Goethe, and Andersen, the poet of the fairy-tales, who had also come to make their homes in Weimar. And all this time he was meditating some great lyrical work on behalf of this illustrious theatre in which the art of modern German poetry had been born. For in the matter of musical art, everything remained to

be done. Neither in France nor in Germany, nor, in fact, anywhere, had anyone dreamed of creating the Weimar of music. Why should not one attempt it at Weimar itself? A hereditary Grand Duke of twenty-eight years and the finest culture, a pure-hearted manager (Herr von Ziegesar), such friends as Berlioz and Wagner, such a director as Liszt himself, these were forces that might perhaps be brought into a group. Not long before, Berlioz, passing through Weimar, had written to Franz: "I can breathe here. I feel something in the air that tells me it is a city of letters, a city of art. Its appearance corresponds exactly to the idea I had formed of it. It is calm, luminous, airy, full of peace and reverie. The surroundings are charming, beautiful waters, shady hills, smiling valleys."

But to breathe at ease there after his own fashion, Liszt still had to make Weimar a city of love.

XV

An Impassioned Amazon

ONE morning in February, 1847, he opened the window of his room in the hotel and gazed in astonishment at the ancient city of Kiev, where there blossomed all about the cathedral the three hundred and sixty churches, with their Byzantine bell-towers, of the holy city. This Russian Queen of Sheba, lying beside the Dnieper in her robe studded with mystic gems, set in gold, predisposed the artist to some transport of the soul. There was enthusiasm in the air, the naïve gaiety of the Orient, and a continual ringing of bells that unfurled over the city a veil of music. The streets were possessed from one end to the other by the monks of Saint Basil (the only order of the Greek Church), by barefooted pilgrims, by Persian women wearing the pointed caps of Ispahan and the gipsies who had a large camp here and swarmed everywhere. Among such a people it would be impossible not to find a woman who would be as eager for sentimental raptures as was the sensual heart of the artist. But how recognize this dove among the fair devotees of the old capital or among those daughters of the Boyars, reclining on the cushions of their English carriages? There are times, however, when secret laws attract drifting souls to one another.

Liszt, then, gave the concert he had announced, played his *Hexameron*, one of Schubert's melodies, an *Étude* of Chopin's, *l'Invitation à la Valse*. And at once he touched the heart of a twenty-eight-year-old princess, who, for the rest of her life, was to treasure as a fetish

the programme that she was rolling between her fingers. Next morning he received, in behalf of the charity concert he never failed to organize, a hundred-rouble note in the name of the Princess Carolyne of Sayn-Wittgenstein. Liszt called upon her to thank her. He was received by a young woman of an Oriental type, with a swarthy skin, whose Tartar eyes never left the visitor. She smoked a cigar. She spoke French more subtly than a Frenchwoman. She was a close friend of the Countess Marie Potocka, the friend of both Liszt and Chopin. She was a Pole. She had travelled all over Europe. She had a little girl of ten whom she adored and a husband, a Russian officer, from whom she lived separated.

In an hour's time they knew everything that was essential about each other, and this first general clearing of the ground left their hearts naked each to each. Already they were aware of the youthful beginnings of love in themselves. Besides, there was nothing to forbid them. The strong piety of each—which they instinctively divined—drew them together more than it troubled them. Their minds were not in the least disturbed to find that they were powerful and free ; on the contrary, they gave themselves up to the rapture of discovering how much alike they were. This meeting, so unexpected and also so complete, obliterated from the past everything that was weak, so that shortly afterwards Liszt could say, in all sincerity : " What circumstance or what incident of my life is worthy of your interest for five minutes ? " There is no doubt that for some people existence has no value except in love. It was passion that Liszt needed in order to rise above the flood of good fortune that threatened to drown his powers. Now he found himself faced with Goethe's advice which had once made

so strong an impression on him in the little village of Œdenburg: to cherish the idea of the impossible.

As for Princess Carolyne, perhaps these words of Barrès will explain her: "When a young woman feels both her heart and her hands empty . . ." Only daughter of one of those great Polish proprietors who counted not less than thirty thousand serfs on his land, educated by an intelligent father, who was both a hypochondriac and a good Latin scholar; unhappily married at seventeen, dreaded for her wit; administering herself her immense estates in Russia, this intellectual Amazon was bound to fall in love at first sight with an artist who was so marvellously feminine and impressionable and over whom she felt able to exercise an increasing authority. To an imperious will this is a very strong temptation. She yielded to it, and only a few days later took Liszt with her to Woronince.

In the midst of the Podolian steppe, between Kiev and Odessa, it was a property, an estate, as large as a province. The master's dwelling was flanked by a chapel and surrounded by a flower-garden, a fine oak wood and a lake whose shores were lost on the horizon. The furnishing of the house had been entirely contrived by the Princess. The drawing-room was in oak, with a large-patterned chintz on the walls. Her own room was uniformly hung in grey, with couches in red and a crucifix that rose to the ceiling. That of the child Marie was entirely in white. The study and the library were in blue and furnished in the English style, and there was even a pale green music-room furnished with sofas and a bear-skin on which the Princess was accustomed to lie when she smoked her tchibouk. There were Russian stoves everywhere. Many other rooms opened out of

the corridors where the servants slept at night—a regular body-guard. All these domestics were musical, and when their masters were bored they would sing in chorus, accompanying themselves on stringed instruments. In the little elaborately gilded chapel some travelling Capuchin would come and say mass on Sunday, or there would be a Roman Catholic priest, for whom they had to send a great distance. When all spiritual help was lacking, the Princess herself read the liturgical prayers in Polish. As for the Prince, he hunted wolves on the steppes or women in all the watering-places of Europe.

Liszt was at once initiated into the Princess's occupations, her philosophical studies of the Talmud, Fichte, and Hegel. The most curious thing of all was that here, as in Rome and Como, a special table was reserved for those Bibles of Daniel Stern, *Faust* and the *Divina Commedia*. Liszt's fantasy, *Après une lecture de Dante*, composed at the Villa Melzi, recurred to his memory, but merely as a simple prelude to a new work he was contemplating. The moment he spoke of it to the Princess she was full of enthusiasm for the idea and full of pride at the thought of at once giving their love a poetic nourishment that would double its amplitude. Berlioz's theory of the union of instrumental music with poetry seemed to them a preparatory step towards even richer forms to which—why not?—they would add painting. Musical diorama, harmonic painting, such were the words they invented for this product of ideal collaboration, a product which was to ripen during the space of several years before becoming the *Dante-Symphony*. *A Tragedy of the Soul* might be added as a sub-title, for Liszt's genius obliged him gradually to give up the useless coloration and literary additions to his subject. At the time, Wagner

alone was occupied with the same artistic problems. Except for such great classical masters as Bach, Glück, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, and a few newcomers such as Berlioz, Chopin and Schumann, the art of music was too steeped in platitude for Liszt not to feel the joy of the apostolate into which he was being driven. The plan in regard to Weimar once more arose in his mind, already beautified by this most stimulating presence. Whatever might happen in the future, he had capital reasons at present for a new love and a new life.

After this first luminous stay at Woronince, Liszt finished his tour in Russia and began to prepare for a new way of living which in his mind was no longer separated from that of the Princess. With the first stages of his journey she began to receive passionate testimony of this : " I can advance only towards you and with you. All my faith, all my hope, all my love are concentrated and summed up in you—*et nunc et semper.*" " Ineffable secrets are revealed to me through you ; henceforth I shall be able to die in peace blessing your name." " I understand only two things, work and the fifth chapter of the *Imitation of Christ.*" " Ah, if only I may see you again soon, for my entire heart and soul, faith and hope exist only in you, through you and for you. May the Lord's angel lead you, O you who are my radiant morning star."

With the first days of October Franz returned to Woronince, where, this time, he stayed four months in a happiness of forgetfulness, an adoration shared by two in a solitude that seemed supremely delightful to the new lovers. Perhaps they ran less risk than others who from the first make their love an ex-voto which they hang on the grille of the chapel and not the God Himself

to whom they pray. They are more concerned with "living for an idea" than with "living their own lives," for it sometimes happens that when one lives for an idea one lives one's life in addition. Carolyne's plans were rapidly formulated. As a matter of fact, they were of a strategic simplicity. The Princess was to obtain the annulment of her marriage at Rome (since she had been married as a minor and against her will), then she was to marry Liszt and they were to retire to Weimar. While the great musical plans were being set on foot, the Princess was to arrange the judicial or financial difficulties of her divorce, assisted at the Tsar's court by the Grand Duchess Marie Paulowna, his sister, who could refuse neither the artist nor the Princess her protection.

With this well arranged, Liszt returned to Germany, somewhat confused by all these matrimonial plans which had been so rapidly sketched out, while the far-sighted Carolyne sold a piece of her property and set aside an initial sum of a million roubles which she sent out of the country. A wise precaution! In fact, it had hardly been taken when the cannons of '48 imperilled all the love affairs of Europe. Fortunately, Princess Carolyne had foreseen the advisability of taking a cure at Carlsbad. Her baggage was packed, her travelling coaches prepared; she crossed the frontier at the very moment when, as in *Michael Strogoff*, a courier from the Emperor arrived at a gallop with orders to close all the gates of Russia. So, while the Revolution beat against the Tsar's barricades, Carolyne was received on Austrian soil by a messenger from Prince Lichnowsky and conducted to his neighbouring castle of Krzyzanowitz.

Franz was waiting for her there, at the home of his dearest, his "supremely intelligent" friend, who had

just left for the Diet at Berlin. The house was absolutely deserted; except for the servants—no one! It was, therefore, a second Woronince, in the middle of April, in the midst of the spring silence, where Franz experienced the seldom-realized joy of work and love created side by side. He blocked out his second symphonic poem, *Hungaria*, beside her whom he already called a "splendid example of the soul." And each day the understanding between them became more perfect, without arousing that intellectual uneasiness which, between Franz and Marie, had always chilled the warmth of their hearts. This too-witty Carolyne who had intimidated the chamberlains of St. Petersburg, this Diana of the steppes, this Catholic who was at once Nordic and Byzantine, had found her master. As sometimes happens with these exacting and faithful natures, she was afraid she would be unable to follow, not the artist to his heights, but the man of humble origin, the steward's son, on his low Hungarian plains. Blushing with a shame that filled Franz with pride, she asked her lover not to set out for Weimar without having visited Raiding and Eisenstadt with her. And it was only after a pilgrimage to Franz's paternal Lares that they arrived in the little city where they planned to live the poem of their love.

Liszt was met there by a letter from that self-willed and singular Wagner to whom his own future, as all the signs of his mind and heart told him, was already closely bound. "Excellent friend, you told me but lately that you had closed your piano for some time, so I suppose that at least for a brief period you have become a man of wealth. Things have been going badly with me, and it suddenly occurred to me that you might help

me. I have undertaken myself the publication of my three operas. . . . The sum in question amounts to five thousand thalers. Could you get it for me? Have you got it, or has someone got it who would give it for love of you? Would it not be most interesting for you to become the publisher-proprietor of my operas? Do you know what would come of it? I should become *a man*, a man to whom existence would be possible, an artist who would never need to ask for another penny in his life, who would be content to work with enthusiasm, with pleasure. My dear Liszt, with this money you could buy me out of servitude. Do you think that as a serf I am worth that price?"

XVI

Weimar, the Muses' Town

WHEN one thinks of Goethe at Weimar, in the very first years of the nineteenth century, it is impossible not to unite with his image that of Schiller. One does not willingly separate from each other these two friends who lived side by side, seeing each other every day and writing to each other many times in the week those highly polite letters. In the latter they spoke of their work with an absence of emphasis, an ironical detachment, a critical sincerity that lead us to think of the relation of these great men as one of an exquisite modesty. They took walks together, paid their court to the Grand Duke, botanized, dissected caterpillars, haunted the theatre, and submitted to each other page by page their reciprocal translations of Voltaire and Shakespeare.

This was the very noble precedent, in the classical and periwigged mode, of the friendship that united Liszt and Wagner half a century later. With the difference that the Grand Duke Karl August was now called Karl Alexander. And that the heroes were different, of course. Wagner and Liszt were not at all like these two Hellenes. From their attachment, nevertheless, from their ideals, the new musical Europe was to be born. And almost a universal æsthetic.

It is sad to think that Wagner ended by stifling under his foliage the fine poplar whose sap he drained and whose infinitely sensitive vibrations he enjoyed more than anyone else. To such a degree, in fact, that an uninformed tradition no longer takes into account any but the less

pure works of Liszt, the juggler's pieces and acrobatic tricks. Here and there one occasionally finds a concert society with a conductor in quest of rarities who revives a fragment of one of his great compositions. But it is almost unexampled to find one with the courage to substitute for the worst and most ill-prepared Wagnerian potpourri a whole work by the master of Weimar. His diversity, his fantasy, his general curiosity, his rich experimentation, his instrumental boldnesses, the multiple researches of that all-curious sensibility, have thus remained almost unknown to the public which he was the first to attempt to win over to a cause not his own. Like some other clear geniuses, he felt a certain attraction for the obscure. His works have a touch of this quality, but it is rather intellectual than harmonic. The dramatic reform achieved by Wagner was so brilliant that what Liszt did in this way, altogether inward and purely creative of forms, has passed almost unperceived. Only to-day have a few composers set about exploring his scores for the rich treasure of thematic and instrumental ideas which they contain. Let us hope that we shall recover them some day, purified of their alloy, as they were written in the first years of Liszt's maturity in the little Thuringian town dedicated for the second time to the Muses.

"Richard Wagner, conductor of the Dresden orchestra, has been here since yesterday. There is a man of admirable genius, yes, an all-powerful genius and such as we need in this country, a new and brilliant apparition in art," Liszt wrote to his secretary Belloni. Wagner at Weimar; in other words, Franz had agreed to the proposed serfdom. Meanwhile, during the nine or ten

months that passed between the first letter of the Saxon composer and his appearance at Weimar, Liszt had taken firm root and boldly initiated the work of reform which he had in mind. A more intelligent and truer devotion to the masters of the past; a deeper and more effective study of the works to be played; a liberal and friendly welcome to the young, the unknown and the misknown, such were the principles of his directorship. An almost complete independence was assured to him by the Grand Duke Karl Alexander, whom he had won over to his cause. Moreover, this young Prince's one desire was to do for music in Germany what his grandfather had done in the interests of dramatic poetry.

For the birthday of the Dowager Grand Duchess, Liszt arranged that every year a new opera should be given by a German composer. The previous year he had chosen *Martha* by Flotow. This year he thought of *Tannhäuser*, which had only been produced at Dresden. But his confidence in Wagner was still limited. As yet, he knew nothing but *Rienzi*. But as Princess Carolyne was obliged to go to Dresden on the matter of her passport, he begged the director of the royal theatres to enable her to hear this *Tannhäuser* of which people were saying that it was a "rotten" work. The director acceded to the desire of Liszt with "earnest commiseration," and the Princess came back, vibrant with enthusiasm, with the score. Liszt placed it on the piano, read it. . . .

A grave moment, and one that turned out very honourably for the history of the man as for the history of art. Text, music, instrumentation, were a complete revelation of what he had been looking for himself. It was his own dramatic conception miraculously realized.

It seemed like his own ideal modelled by a strange hand. The higher the structure rose under his fingers, the more this *Tannhäuser*, which destroyed in Liszt a part of his reason for being, transported him to the summit of all possible musical emotion. It was a deliverance, an enormous arrangement of rhythmical joys. What movement in all its grandeurs! Every *crescendo* was the pride of an intellectual ambition. Man was exalted here as the prince of all desires. Nevertheless, his heart secreted the evil from which his immense decay resulted, from which his sorrow was born—and from this his pardon. Such was the rhythm in which Franz found the true music of his soul. This Wagnerian victory, with consequences for him almost as unequivocal as those of death, Liszt hailed with tears of gratitude. He foresaw, however, how much it was going to cost him: a still incalculable part of himself and some of his best friends. Meyerbeer, for instance, who was broken like a plaster cast. And Berlioz, Berlioz the susceptible, whom he had always so eagerly defended and whose *Cellini* he had promised to perform.

But the Princess, already won over to Wagner, did not convince him at once. What position should honour reserve for friendship when one's artistic conscience whole-heartedly supports a new and vivid admiration? The decision he had to make was too serious to spring from enthusiasm alone. He retired to the little oratory that he and Carolyne had arranged in their house and remained there alone on his knees, more than ever filled with a sense of the sacred character of his mission. A touching prayer, and less naïve than it seems, since actually the future, not of a single man but of a whole group of minds, depended on the reply that was granted. When

he came out, his face pale and solemn, Liszt had chosen the cause of art.

As soon as the court had authorized the production of *Tannhäuser*, he wrote to Wagner. But the latter, harassed by the stupid chicanery of the director of the Saxon theatres, could not come to Weimar to be present at a single rehearsal. A correspondence therefore followed between Wagner and Liszt, and one of the most beautiful friendships that have ever bound two men.

"SIR AND DEAR FRIEND,—

"You know already through Herr von Ziegesar with what ardour, what admiration and ever-increasing sympathy, we are studying your *Tannhäuser*. If it is possible for you to come here on the 15th, to be present at the last rehearsal and the performance that will follow, the next day, it will be a true joy for us all.

"*February* 9, 1849."

"DEAR FRIEND LISZT,—

"According to all that I hear, you, after the unprecedented success of your artistic life, have succeeded quite recently in winning another, in no way inferior to the finest of your former triumphs and probably even surpassing them in more than one respect. Do you think it is impossible to judge this from a distance? Read for yourself. Four years have gone by since my opera *Tannhäuser* was published and not a theatre in the world has yet thought of playing it. And then you came from a great distance, settled in a town that possessed a small court theatre and set to work at once, enabling your friend, who has been so sorely tried, to take one more step forward. Without wasting any time in talking and negotiating, you have concentrated all your energies on this work which is new to you and placed my piece in rehearsal. Now, you may be certain that no one knows as well as I do what it is to produce a work of this kind in the present circumstances. To do so one has to throw body and soul into it, sacrifice one's body and soul, concentrate all the fibres of one's body, all the faculties of one's soul, and have in view this single end: to bring to the light the work of one's friend, and in such a way that the representation will be *beautiful and useful*

to one's friend. Dear friend, you have lifted me up as if by enchantment . . . I have found again the courage to endure. *Once more, it is to you I owe this.*"

The first performance took place on February 16th, followed by a second on the 18th, at neither of which Wagner, prevented by his chief, was able to be present. Both were brilliantly successful.

"Very dear Friend," wrote Liszt, "I owe so much to your valiant and superb genius, to the grand and burning pages of your *Tannhäuser*, that I feel quite embarrassed to accept the thanks you have the kindness to address to me on the occasion of the two productions which I have had the honour and the happiness to direct. Henceforth, once for all, will you count me among the number of your most zealous and devoted admirers—from far and near count upon me and command me?"

Wagner replied:

"We two are coming along famously, are we not? If the world were ours, I think we should give people a good deal of pleasure. I hope that, so far as we are concerned, we shall always understand each other. May those who do not wish to be with us remain behind us; let us in this way seal our alliance."

Two months later, the revolution, which was still smouldering a little everywhere in Germany, broke out in Dresden. The results were serious, hastened as they were by the intervention of the Prussian troops. The country roads were soon crowded with dispersed rioters, and, on the morning of May 13th, Wagner, a fugitive, carrying a valise, presented himself before Liszt. Having taken his little part in the occurrences as a revolutionary theorist and lover of great spectacles, Wagner was somewhat anxious about the possible consequences. Franz was enchanted at the visit of his great man and stirred also by the memory of the violent days of 1830. It was

necessary to establish his friend in some safe place, and Liszt at once thought of the Altenburg.

"The Altenburg?"

"The residence of Princess Carolyne. Come!"

Carrying in turn the valise in which the composer had packed a few belongings, the manuscript of his *Lohengrin*, the *Flying Dutchman*, and the notes for his *Jesus of Nazareth*, they crossed the Ilm and clambered through a forest and a park laid out in the old days by Counsellor Goethe, to the great house, rising above the town, that had been rented by the Princess.

There Wagner spent eight days in passionate arguments. His head was crammed with manifestoes and literary works of which he was developing the outlines: *Art and Revolution*, *The Work of Art in the Future*. One evening, hidden at the back of a box, he watched a rehearsal of his *Tannhäuser*, conducted by Liszt, and the tears came to his eyes:

"I was astonished to find in him my second self. What I felt in composing this music, he felt in directing it; what I wanted to express in writing it, he has uttered through the voices of the singers. Marvellous! Thanks to this rarest of all friends, and at the very moment when I was becoming a man without a country, I win what I have sought everywhere and in vain: the true, the long-awaited homeland of my art. When I was in exile far away, this great vagabond established himself firmly in a little retreat in order to make a homeland for me. Everywhere and always interested in me, prompt and decided in his help when it was needed, his great heart open to each of my desires, with the most devoted love for everything that touches me, Liszt has become for me such a friend as I have never before found, and this in a measure the fullness of which can only be comprehended when it really envelops one in its full force."

But a warrant for his arrest had been issued. Liszt

was informed of it by the Grand Duchess herself who wanted to give Wagner time to find a refuge. She carried her benevolence so far as to make it possible for him to visit that most ancient feudal castle of Thuringen, the Wartburg, which he had just celebrated in so brilliant a way. Descending again from the heights the two men said good-bye to each other. Wagner escaped to Bavaria, then to Switzerland and Paris.

Liszt shut himself up three whole days with the score of *Lohengrin*. Three days during which he did not leave his piano. The Princess carried his meals to him herself, so that his work should not be interrupted. Nevertheless, the technical and vocal resources of the Weimar theatre were still so inadequate that he was obliged to let a year go by before he could think of a performance. But Wagner, who was hardly more successful in Paris than he had been ten years before, was seized with that eager need which an artist feels to see at last the birth of a work that has long been finished and obstructs his heart. Again he turned to Liszt:

"Dear friend, I have just read a few passages of the score of my *Lohengrin*. As a rule, I never re-read my works. I have been seized with an immense desire to see this opera performed. I am therefore addressing to you an urgent prayer: to have my *Lohengrin* played. You are the only man to whom I would address such a prayer as this. To no other but you would I confide the creation of this opera; but I entrust it to you without a shadow of fear or hesitation, with an absolute confidence. Have my *Lohengrin* played, so that its entrance into life may be your work."

And then:

"Find me someone who will buy my *Lohengrin* in its entirety. Find someone who will order my *Siegfried*. I will not be over-exacting."

Liszt was touched again by these appeals. He agreed. He sent his friend some money drawn from his own capital. He induced the Grand Duke and the management of the Weimar theatre to send funds also. He exerted himself in every possible way. He wrote:

"You have never ceased, I assure you, to be present with me and very close to my heart. The serious and enthusiastic admiration which I have consecrated to your genius cannot admit of procrastination and merely sterile sentiments. You may have complete confidence that I shall allow no circumstance to prevent me from doing everything that it is possible for me to do in the interest of your reputation or your glory, in your personal interest. But such a friend as yourself is not always easy and convenient to serve; for those to whom it is given to understand you must above everything serve you intelligently and with dignity. Your *Lohengrin* will be given under most exceptional conditions and the best ones for its success. The management is to make an expenditure on this occasion of nearly 2,000 thalers, something that has never been obtained before at Weimar in the memory of man. The press will not be forgotten. . . . The whole personnel will be aflame with enthusiasm. The number of violins will be somewhat augmented (16 or 18 in all), the bass-clarinet has been purchased: no essential will be lacking for the musical material and its arrangement. I shall take charge myself of all the rehearsals of the piano, the choruses, the quartettes and the orchestra. . . . It goes without saying that we shall not cut out a note, an iota of your work, and that we shall give it in its beautiful absoluteness, as far as it is possible for us to do so."

From Wagner:

"I must say it: you are a friend. Forgive me if I tell you this again, for I have ever considered the friendship of two men the noblest and most admirable bond that can exist between two human creatures, and you reveal this idea in its fullest reality, no longer leaving it a mere conception, but so that I feel and actually touch in a way what a friend is. . . . If anything exalts the heart, it is to have a friend; but there is something that exalts it still more,

and that is to be a friend. In more than one respect, your letter has made a great impression on me. I have felt the pulse of our modern art, and I know that it is dying. But, far from saddening me, this fills me with joy, for I also know that it is not *art* that will perish, but only our particular art, an art that is outside of real life, while the true art, immortal, always new, is still to be born. The monumental character of our art will disappear; we shall shake off the servile attachment to the past, the egotistical anxiety for permanence and immortality; we shall ignore the past and the future in order to live and create in the present, the present alone. When you have launched *Lohengrin* in the world to your own satisfaction, I shall finish my *Siegfried* also, but only *for you* and for Weimar. Two days ago I would not have believed myself capable of making this resolution. So it is *to you* that I owe this."

From Liszt:

"We are swimming in the open ether of your *Lohengrin*, and I flatter myself that we shall succeed in giving it in accordance with your intentions. Every day we have from three to four hours of rehearsal, and, as far as things have gone, the parts and the quartette are passably in order. . . . Everything that can be humanly realized at Weimar in the year of grace 1850 will be brought about, you may be assured, for your *Lohengrin*, which, in spite of all the stupid negotiations, the mock fears and the too genuine prejudices, will be produced very worthily—I guarantee—on the 28th of this month."

And later:

"Your *Lohengrin* is a sublime work from one end to the other: the tears have come into my eyes at many a passage. As a pious churchman underlines word by word the whole *Imitation of Christ*, I may easily come to the point of underlining note by note your *Lohengrin*."

Nevertheless, this *première* did not give Liszt all the joy that he anticipated. In the first place, the author, still under the ban of exile, was unable to be present. (He took part only in spirit, following the production

hour by hour in the Hôtel du Cygne, at Lucerne, where he had come to spend two days.) Then the impression it made musically and dramatically was much less than he expected. Wagner, at Zurich, after it was all over, understood the reasons better, the lack of life, of fire, of the proper syllabic accentuation on the part of the actors, and especially the poor taste of the spectators who were expecting to enjoy recitatives in the Italian style and whose minds were not prepared to encounter a dramatic performance. From these weeks that were so full of pathos for the two artists, let us only recall the strong upwelling of their affection, their love, to use the word which they were never ashamed to write. Such was the interpenetration of their spirits that one can find no other word to express it better. Both of them always felt a jealous pride in it.

"I am filled with the deepest and most bountiful emotion," wrote Wagner, "when I see how I have succeeded through my labours as an artist in so interesting you in my work that you are willing to employ a large share of your extraordinary faculties in opening the way for my ideas and propagating them, not only in the outer world but also in the interior of beings, in their true inwardness. I see in ourselves two men, worlds apart in our ways of penetrating to the heart of art, who have found each other and given each other a fraternal hand in the joy of their discovery. It is only under the influence of this feeling of joy that I can accept without blushing your expression of admiration, for I know that when you vaunt my qualifications and what, thanks to them, I have produced, you too are only expressing the joy of our having found each other in the heart of art. . . .

"How extraordinary everything has been since you appeared! If I could describe to you the nature of the love that you inspire in me! There is no torture, there is no voluptuous delight that has not vibrated in this love. One day I am tormented by jealousy, by the fear of that which is alien to me in your particular nature.

I am full of anxiety, of alarm, I am even on the brink of doubt. Then suddenly there rises in me a flame like that which burns a forest, and everything is consumed in this fire; it is a fire that nothing but a torrent of tears of joy would extinguish. You are a marvellous man, and marvellous is our love! If we did not love each other to this degree, we should have to hate each other terribly."

Let us not attribute this mainly to exaltation, to romanticism. Let us not seek for explanations where there is no need for them. Wagner and Liszt had both loved others sufficiently, with all their body and all their soul, for us to grant them without any mental reservation this holy possession of the spirit.

XVII

The Song of Two Souls, and Symphonic Poems

THE more Liszt distributed with prodigal elegance the genius of his hands, the more reserved and shy he became in regard to his own soul—that is, once he really possessed his soul. He had scarcely become aware of it before his thirty-ninth year. His life up to that had been " spent in waiting," he said. That quivering activity as a virtuoso had been, during twenty-five years, only a preparation for the toil of personal creation, coupled with love. During the Weimar period, the rhythm of his existence was divided between two *tempi*: the hours of tender solitude, when he composed, and those passed in the theatre or in the concert-rooms, when he expressed himself.

Immediately after *Lohengrin*, Liszt was entrusted with the musical part of a festival which the city was preparing to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Goethe. Liszt thought at first that he would open the ceremony with the *Faust* of Schumann. But the nervously sensitive Schumann had never lost his feeling of resentment against Liszt, following an argument on the Leipzig school, and remained obdurate. Liszt smiled and put *Faust* in rehearsal just the same. He repeated the offence two years later by giving *Manfred* for the first time, then the opera of *Geneviéve*. This was the only vengeance that Liszt drew from a misunderstanding which, in the case of the Schumanns, soon turned into an inexplicable hatred. Clara especially raged against the " smasher of pianos," whose greatest sin, no doubt,

had been to dedicate himself to the glory of Wagner and not to that of her husband. Even this must be qualified, for Liszt was again the first one to give a concert devoted solely to the works of Schumann, and he wrote an article that remains famous on this pair of artists. But, as it was difficult to contest his success as a pianist, it was necessary to make him pay dear for that which he carried off as a conductor.

After *Lohengrin* and *Manfred*, Liszt put on the *King Alfred* of Raff, a rather genial, impecunious young madcap whom for a long time he kept as his secretary in order to have a pretext for serving him. Then came the turn of *Benvenuto Cellini*, played for the first time, without any success, in Paris, forty years before. Liszt took the piece up again, as he thought it the freshest and best handled piece that Berlioz had produced. The author was unable to be present, but he addressed to Liszt the same words as Wagner: "I have faith in you alone." A few months later, Berlioz having come to Weimar Liszt organized in his honour a Berlioz Week, in which were performed *Cellini*, *The Damnation of Faust*, *Romeo and Juliet*, the *Harold Symphony*, the overtures of *King Lear*, *Waverley*, and *The Captive*. In spite of this, Berlioz, who took little pleasure in this celebrity which to him seemed posthumous, was hurt by the rising glory of Wagner. He had suffered all his life from the delay of his popularity. When he came on a third visit, he went to hear *Lohengrin*, with the score in his hands, but he left the box in the middle of the first act. Liszt was not too much disturbed by this, and the criticisms of his friend had no effect upon him. "In the domain of the beautiful," he said, "genius alone makes authority." Princess Carolyne knew how to soothe this immense wounded

pride. When Berlioz was spending the evening with her at the Altenburg, and she asked him about his works, he spoke of *The Trojans*. He allowed her to see his discouragement; but the grandeur of the plan aroused the enthusiasm of the Princess so much that she cried: "If you shrink from the difficulties which this work may and should cause you, if you are weak enough to be afraid and not to dare everything for Dido and Cassandra, you must never appear before me again." This was just what the man needed. He finished the work and dedicated it to her.

Such names and such enterprises would suffice to make the renown of any stage. Liszt added to these many others, like the *Alfonso and Estrella* of Schubert, and the *Flying Dutchman*, all of them first performances; the *Fidelio* of Beethoven (still scarcely known); the *Orfeo* of Glück and his *Iphigenia*, *Armida*, *Alcestis*; all the operas of Mozart and Rossini; the *Euryanthe* of Weber; Handel's *Messiah* and *Samson*; Schumann's *Paradise and the Peri*; all of Mendelssohn; the best of Spontini, Cherubini, and Halévy, not to mention the orchestral music. The *Ninth Symphony* of Beethoven was played for the first time, thanks to Liszt, in a number of towns of Southern Germany, Weimar, Carlsruhe, Mannheim, and elsewhere. It was regarded everywhere, in spite of its half-rehabilitation by Wagner at Dresden (in 1846), as a failure, the product of a deaf and deranged hypochondriac. Now, this work required, in the opinion of Liszt, a *progression* in the accentuation, the rhythm, the manner of phrasing and declaiming certain passages, of setting off the lights and shadows, in a word, a progression in the very style of the execution, which was far from being realized by most of the orchestras. There,

as elsewhere, the letter killed the spirit. The true task of an orchestral conductor consisted not merely in managing the baton like an automaton, but in feeling and penetrating works with intelligence " and embracing all hearts in a sort of communion of the beautiful, the grand and the true, of art and poetry." According to him, the conductor should render himself ostensibly almost useless. " We are pilots, not labourers," he cried.

It was Liszt again who originated the Goethe Foundation, a sort of artistic Olympian games, which were to bring together once a year at Weimar the poets, sculptors, painters and musicians of all the German states. But this project, encouraged at first by the court, " died at birth " after having cost its author a long and laborious gestation. It was thanks to the faith he received from Liszt, thanks to his encouragement and his gifts of money, that Wagner preserved the strength to struggle against an evil fate and work at his *Siegfried*, paid for in advance, at Franz's entreaty, by the Grand Duke. " You ask me what I am doing," Franz wrote to Carolyne. " Here is a little statement of the things that have taken up my hours. The *Siegfried* of Wagner, an affair that is now settled. . . . Conversations and letters for the Goethe Foundation. . . . Making final arrangements for definitely establishing our orchestra here in one or two months; arranging pensions, new engagements (the violinist Joachim, among others), obtaining instruments. . . . Rehearsals and performances of *Lohengrin*, *La Favorita*, and, for this week, *Fidelio* and *Robert le Diable*. Two concerts at the court, a third on Thursday. Three or four lessons to the Grand Duchess. . . . Sending off to Härtel (the publisher) two manuscripts, which I had to revise before I dispatched them. Sending off

Lohengrin to Brockhaus with the suggestions you have given me. Copying the *Poetic Harmonies* and the *Fantasie* of Schubert, which I must send off soon. Correcting the proofs of the *Première Rhapsodie Hongroise*, and sending off the second along with my *Études*."

All this accounts only for the material part of the employment of his time—what he called "the things that have taken up my hours." Let me add the literary works of this epoch: his big book on Chopin, his essays on the *Orfeo* of Glück, on *Fidelio*, *Euryanthe*, Berlioz's *Harold*, *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, the *Flying Dutchman*, and *Rheingold*, his pamphlet on Mozart. We can understand how this vigorous activity had made Weimar the esoteric centre of music in Germany. We understand, too, how the traditional criticism, that which is called the "Conservatory" spirit, should have proclaimed a holy war against the infidel. But the most curious fact is not that Liszt, who was less and less supported by his uneasy Grand Duke, should have triumphed in spite of all. The really interesting thing is the other *tempo* of the vital rhythm of this generous blood.

In order to catch a glimpse of it one would have had to climb up to the Altenburg, passing through a corner of the Grand Ducal park. There, in the silence of an old house, dwelt two hearts who communicated together through a music, imperceptible to the ear, which only the soul heard.

"Let us not be torn from one another," was the continual cry of Franz to Carolyne and of Carolyne to Franz. Strongly united as they were, the least absence was a drama from which it seemed they would never recover. A concert directed by Franz in some other town, a visit of the Princess to some cure, a business trip, instantly

unloosed a passionate correspondence. If they were merely surprised in their *tête-à-tête* by the visit of some bore, they found a way to pass notes behind his back. It was, above everything else, a liaison of souls, the need of continually saying everything, in spite of the inadequacy of human language, as Bossuet expressed it. "Farewell *till to-morrow*, strength, grandeur, approbation, reason of my being and my existence," wrote Franz. "I ask myself if it is not you who once made me a gift of my eyes and my hands, and if, every evening, you do not wind up the works of my heart." . . . "My first prayer, the first breath of my soul, is for you." . . . "You are unceasingly and everywhere present, through those mysterious emanations of the heart that bind us to one another." . . . "Farewell, my beautiful eyes and my beautiful eagle's clutch."

Such was the nature of a love which, during many years, kept itself unchanged. Labour, faith, the hope of marrying each other preserved it; the hope, so dazzling that it was almost morbid, of belonging to each other before the law. On their arrival at Weimar they had lived at first apart, Franz at the Hôtel Erbprinz, while the Princess established herself at the Altenburg. Because of the court, they had to observe a good deal of discretion. For the rest, the Grand Duchesses closed their eyes with evident satisfaction, and even received the Princess informally. But the lovers soon realized that, on the Russian side, things were not going according to their taste. The Tsar, beset by the entire Wittgenstein family and anxious to preserve an immense property for one of his officers, absolutely opposed a divorce, both in his official capacity and as supreme head of the Church. Carolyne then decided to go to law. The Dowager

Grand Duchess tried to intervene with her brother in the name of morality. But it was hardly a question of morality. All their efforts were in vain; so Franz one day took it upon himself to renounce the whole comedy and move to the Altenburg. This caused no smiles, so accustomed was every one to seeing them together.

They divided this substantial building between them. The Princess and her daughter occupied the main suite of apartments, and Franz a little wing that opened on the garden. They established themselves with childish joy, mingling their possessions and their destinies. The great *salon* received Franz's Viennese concert-piano and a good part of his musical library. On the walls were a few portraits of composers, medallions of Berlioz, Wagner, and the ungrateful Schumann. Above the door, a humorous drawing represented cupids juggling with musical notes; it was from the hand of Bettina von Arnim and bore the dedication, "Eljen, Franz Liszt!" All by itself, overhanging the piano, the original impression of the mask of the dead Beethoven.

In the adjoining room were the panoplies of arms given to Liszt—in honour of no one knows what—by the great Russian lords and the pashas. A whole museum of Turkish objects, mother-of-pearl tables, coffee-services, Oriental rugs and pipes. A single portrait, that of the best-loved friend, Lichnowsky, assassinated at Frankfort by the revolutionists of '48. On the floor above was the music-room proper. It contained the Erard preferred by the pianist and the gigantic instrument constructed under his direction by the house of Alexandre and Son of Paris, a combination of a piano and an organ. Fitted with three keyboards, six registers, a footboard and a system of pipes which reproduced all

the wind-instruments, this epitome of an orchestra was the only one of its kind. It was called the piano-melodium. (Liszt was already haunted by the thought of discovering or inventing new sound-combinations.) Just beside it, and like a dwarf child of this monster, was a precious relic, the piano of Mozart.

The library was the sacred ark. Here were two more instruments: an Erard and a Broadwood. On the shelves, the books given him by his friends in the old days: Hugo, Sainte-Beuve, Lamartine, Lamennais. A cupboard with glass doors contained autograph scores by Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and almost all those of Wagner. As for the Broadwood, it was never opened save by Liszt alone, once or twice a year, for the Princess and the rarest friends, for it was Beethoven's piano, the last on which he had played before his death.

One had to go out into the court and climb a little wooden stairway to reach Liszt's apartment. This consisted of two rooms: the study, called the Blue Room, and the room where he slept. This Blue Room was square, with a low ceiling, and had a view over the garden. It was furnished for work: a piano, a desk, a table, a few chairs upholstered in light cretonnes. On the wall, two engravings: Dürer's *Melancholia* and a drawing representing Saint Francis de Paul walking on the waves. It was to the Blue Room they brought his breakfast in the morning. Scarcely was it placed on the table when the Princess arrived by a narrow corridor that bound the great house into one. But before taking their *café au lait*, they collected their thoughts together in the tiny oratory where there was just room for their twin *prie-dieu*. Theirs was a love entirely drawn from devotion, from a beautiful faith, which was never debated

between them. On the table, a Pascal which Franz often opened. One day, when he had just read a few pages, he summed up on a margin of the book his whole theology : " If it were established that all the metaphysical proofs in support of the existence of God were reduced to nothing by the arguments of philosophy, there would still remain one, absolutely invincible. The affirmation of God through our lamentations, the need we have for Him, the aspiration of our souls towards His love : this suffices for me, and I do not have to ask for it to remain a believer to the last breath of my life." Mysticism of the artist. Inner poetry. Respect for suffering. Faith was in him the surest adjuvant of love. A sentiment very like that which Delacroix uttered at this same time : " I have a great love for churches. . . . It is as if they were adorned with all the prayers that suffering hearts have therein breathed towards heaven."

It was during this first Weimar period (1848–60) that Liszt produced most of his works and those that are most important : the twelve *Symphonic Poems*, the *Sonata in B-Minor*, the *Faust-Symphony*, the *Gran Mass*, the *Dante-Symphony*, and the greater number of his songs. A magnificent mass of work, piled up in twelve years, thanks undoubtedly to the Amazon of Woronince. Her firm hand, armed with a cigar and a pencil, guided with a marvellous sureness the big nervous thoroughbred which it trained for the daily work.

He began with a symphonic poem : *What One Hears on a Mountain*, sketched in Podolia after Victor Hugo. A symbolic work for two voices : " the one expressing Nature, the other Humanity." But, unlike the sort of programme music that had preceded it in Beethoven and Berlioz, Liszt's poem was not a picture but a story, an

exposition of feeling. Too often this eludes the orchestral conductors and the pianists who give the same value to sonorous arabesques that they give to a melody. Here, as in most of his works, Liszt seeks above everything the progress of a thought upon which he concentrates the interest of its developments. "The Spirit," he said, "must breathe upon these sonorous waves as upon the great waters of Creation."

His *Tasso* (*lamento e trionfo*), more subtle in its inspiration, expresses still better this tragedy of the intellectual shades. Solitude is the first of the visionary tastes of the poet, the initial phase of an unending lamentation provoked by the discovery that his own nature is like Tasso's prison-house. One is born in an enclosed universe from which it becomes increasingly impossible to escape. But every one had his Ferrara, that is the experience of perceiving form and feeling by means of love. For a brief space, all is delight, dancing, amusement. For one chooses one's Léonore—beauty, folly, or simple pleasure—in order to place happiness beyond one's reach, to withdraw it from one's consciousness so that it becomes solely the source of spiritual ardour. But the reason is disturbed by these feverish melancholies. There comes, however, for Tasso, as for those who are able to remain faithful to their sorrows, a far-distant glory that rises over the ruins. The lamentations of the madman are acclaimed after his death.

It was while he was interpreting the poet's story that Liszt became aware of the extent to which his own real musical destiny lay stifled beneath the outward pomp and success of his life. Is that why the *Funeral Héroïde* is dedicated to sorrow? There was still another reason. In the procession of mourners, the tocsin of the Revolu-

tion mingled with the funeral knell of two very dear friends who died this very year, '49, only a few months apart: Lichnowsky and Chopin. Attacked by the brass instruments, the knell is prolonged in a terrifying unison of all the stringed instruments in which this great inventor of dissonances expresses the incompleteness of the perfect, the terror of the light as well as the terror of death. This prolonged fanfare bursts forth too brightly, too convincingly, like a Last Judgment. One might almost call it an ode to the joy of dying through excess of light, like a crystal that is broken under the afflux of sympathetic vibrations.

To this lure of the abyss is opposed *Mazeppa*, with its progressive coloration, derived rather from Delacroix than from Victor Hugo. It is a ballad in two songs, constructed on a single *motif*, in which it is less important for us to trace the legend of the Knight "bound to the fatal croup" of the unreal than to abandon ourselves to the vigorous life of the music itself. This power, in its immediacy, can be really enjoyed only by the mind of an artist, so naked is it, so stripped of all literature. The extreme division of the orchestra, the multitude of its details, extends so far that one loses the central idea, which seems to melt into space. But gradually it reappears, powerfully brought together again, to finish its course in a march the rhythm of which dominates with an irresistible force all its fantasies. "Mazeppa," wrote Wagner to Liszt, "is admirably beautiful all the same; when I ran through it the first time I gasped for breath. The poor horse made me unhappy: Nature and the world are still a terrible thing. Your works taken together seem to me in a way like an incarnation of your personal superiority; that is why they are so new, so

incomparable, that it will be a long time before criticism knows how to classify them."

To the same intellectual source must be assigned the *Prometheus*, which Liszt described in this way: "Sorrow and glory—summed up thus, the fundamental thought of this too veracious fable lends itself only to a tempestuous form of expression. . . . A triumphant desolation through the perseverance of a proud energy forms the musical character of this theme." Plunging further into the perilous search for a concrete work of art based on pure sensations, Liszt declares that he has only tried to convey "elements as devoid of body as they are eternal in feeling." This almost Mallarméean *tour d'esprit* led him soon after to the most poetic of his inspirations, the *Bruits de Fête*. They have no inscription. They are as unexplained as joy. And that is precisely what they are: the rejoicings of the soul. Liszt and Carolyne, in their Blue Room at the Altenburg, had dedicated themselves to their love, of which this composition was the epithalamium. It was to have been their wedding music. Liszt had sketched it while on a visit to Eilsen, in the summer of '51, at a moment when their plan seemed to be going favourably. Among all his poems, he loved this one especially, for at its heart was embodied, in the form of a Polonaise, the musical portrait of Carolyne.

It was while studying Glück's *Orfeo* with the orchestra at Weimar that he conceived the idea of writing his own. He recalled a vase in the Louvre which showed Orpheus, his brow bound with the mystic fillet, a mantle of stars over his shoulders, the lyre in his hands, his lips open to sing. He was mourning for Eurydice; but, if the gods permitted him to snatch her for an instant from the shades of the subterranean world, it was not to grant

her more than a brief moment of life. A beautiful combination of harps, a horn and violoncellos evokes this classic symbol of the ideal vanishing in misfortune and sorrow.

If in *Orpheus* the "programme" has its typical value in illustrating a legend, the *Préludes* again are a painting of the inner life, a meditation on this theme of Lamartine: "Is our life anything but a series of Preludes to that unknown song of which death intones the first and solemn note?" So the need for carefully shaping forms alternates in the artist with the need for tracing ideas.

Hungaria is explained by its name: a national fresco on the model of the great decorations of Kaulbach. A piece written to order, official architecture, built on four themes like the gateway to a festival. Kaulbach, to whom Liszt was personally attached, had shown him one of those vast compositions which people so admired during the romantic period and from which the musician at once received the suggestion for his *Battle of the Huns*. Together with *What One Hears on the Mountain*, it forms a diptych, one of the poems denoting the conflict between spirit and matter, the other the struggle between Christianity and Paganism. Musically, however, the texture is very different in the two parts. The battle opens under a dark, lowering sky. The cavalcade of Huns sweeps by in a rhythm from which Wagner was to derive the first gallop of his Walküres' ride: just as, it may be said in passing, he found a number of the grandest sonorities of the *Twilight of the Gods* in the *Sonata in B-Minor* and many of his other richest harmonies in the works of this friend who was so richly endowed and so modest. Not that this is of any great importance. Liszt's generosity never impoverished him, and Wagner could well afford

to take lightly everything he borrowed from him: he has richly repaid the debt to us. Echoing with cries, trampled by terrible armies, the fields soon resound with the first Christian chant. The banners of the Church, in the midst of this *mêlée*, are hurled against the square commanded by Attila. But the Goths triumph. The "meteoric and solar" light shining from the Cross suddenly dissipates the shadow, and the *Crux Fidelis*, beginning *pianissimo* on the organ, spreads over the whole finale with a mounting grandeur.

Along with this pictorial romanticism, there was a literary subject of equal amplitude that could not fail to attract Liszt. After Hugo, Lamartine, Dante, he must of necessity have turned to Shakespeare. There is this resource in Shakespeare: that anyone who is weary of his state of spiritual dryness is certain to find in this father of love a new poetic baptism, is sure of being rejuvenated, of opening a whole library of sensations. This universe is certain to endure through the perfection of its equilibrium. Liszt attacked the supreme subject, the simplest and the most complicated: *Hamlet*. And, as always happens when a man studies this summary of the whole human problem, he confined himself to the shortest, the most condensed comments. Of the twelve symphonic scores, *Hamlet* is the shortest: fifty pages in all. For, with an admirable sureness of judgment, Liszt goes straight to the essential themes: the monologue, Ophelia, and the mock-madness of him for whom even his mother's heart is nothing but a "rhapsody of words." By a double introduction of oboes and flutes, clarinets and bassoons, Liszt presents the question, "To be or not to be," and follows it with a solo on the horn emphasized by an accompaniment of kettle-drums suggesting

with extraordinary distinctness the uncertainty of the spirit. Then follow the thoughts, intersecting one another in a constantly more dense orchestration which culminates in an *allegro appassionato*, rising to the point of despair. But without pathos, without drama, a cold *crescendo*, procured by a simple rhythmical contraction, the 4/4s becoming 3/4s without any thematic change, just at the moment when the image of Ophelia, described in fifty-eight measures, " ironically " crosses the mind (the artist himself wrote the word at the head of the *allegro*). Four times, as in Shakespeare, the *motif* of the ghost appears, then vanishes. And at each of these appeals the themes of despair and uncertainty are revived. Everything dies away on the question posed at the outset, and, in spite of a contrapuntal interpretation of striking richness, it remains insoluble and in suspense.

The last of the symphonic poems borrows its title and its character from the poem of Schiller : *Die Ideale*. Liszt has chosen here three episodes of the soul, three " stimmungen," to use the consecrated word : enthusiasm, that of youth which bears in itself the best of the human genius ; disillusion ; and, lastly, creation, or perhaps one might say more justly, the will to create. More than any other, this composition seems to burst forth full of life from the well-spring of him for whom the inspired, or visionary, state, consisting of a certain inner plenitude or perfection of expressive force, was the most constant condition of the artist. It is less joy than confidence, less love than an exquisite candour. Here, as elsewhere, the spirited brilliancy of Liszt's sonorities is above everything limpidly naïve, naïve in the desirable meaning of the word, the *naïveté* of a soul always convinced that " beauty is the shining of truth."

Faith is decidedly the major sign of this temperament, in daily communion of the feelings with God. "I went to Joachim's," he writes. "He played by chance one of the last quartettes of Beethoven in A, of which the *adagio* was described as '*Canzone di ringraziamento alla Divinita d'un guarito.*' That was a veritable sacrament for me. I wept, I prayed. . . . I should have liked to have my day end there." *Die Ideale* is an act of faith and joy from the depths of the difficult years. On the one hand, the marriage with Carolyne, so long hoped for, had proved to be impossible. On the other hand, the public turned a closed and hostile ear to the audacities of the forerunner. Even that little friendly court of Weimar began to withdraw from the solitary of the Altenburg, who would agree to no concessions where his apostolic mission was involved.

These obstacles, however, served to excite his creative faculties, for two more major works must be set down to this period of flow and energy: the *Sonata in B-Minor* and the *Faust-Symphony*. The love of a woman sustained him in the task of remaining faithful to himself. And the friendship of Wagner. He had grounds enough for feeling himself justified in such a eulogy as this: "Your appeal *To Artists*"—a male chorus, by Liszt, occurring in *Die Ideale*—"is a great, beautiful and admirable gesture of your true life as an artist. I have been profoundly moved by the power of your purpose. You express it with passion, in an epoch and under such circumstances that men would do well to try to understand you. I do not know a soul to-day who would be capable of doing anything like it, of doing it with such power. My good friend, you should have singers such as I have dreamed of for my Wotan. So reflect on what

I have said to you. I have become so abominably practical that I am always thinking of the production: that is a new source of the luxurious despair in which I delight. Thanks, therefore, for the *Artists*. I am almost ready to believe that you have given it to *me alone*, and that no one else will ever know what you have given to the world."

The dedication of the *Symphonic Poems* was nevertheless reserved for her who, on the evening of the concert at Kiev, had silently dedicated her life to him. On her birthday, a certain eighth of February, when she entered the Blue Room, the Princess found the precious scores, exquisitely bound, lying on the work-table where they had their coffee. In his large, childish handwriting, Franz had given them this dedication:

"To her who has fulfilled her faith through love—whose hope has grown greater in the midst of sorrow—who has built her happiness upon sacrifice. To her who remains the companion of my life, the firmament of my mind, the living prayer and the heaven of my soul—to Jeanne Elizabeth Carolyne."

XVIII

The "Musicians of the Future" at Zurich and Paris

FOUR years had passed since Liszt and Wagner had seen each other when, in the first days of July, 1853, Franz was at last able to set out for Zurich. His pockets were full of the latest letters of the friend who was waiting for him, crying out for him, so imperious was the need he felt of unbosoming his heart and mind. These two men had established their affection in a universe where it developed under the sign of the ideal. It dominated them; it dominated their every day. It was consubstantial with their souls. Even Wagner's growing passion for Mathilde Wesendonck and that of Liszt for Carolyne did not rise to these Platonic regions of the heavenly Aphrodite. "Far or near, each one remembers the one he has chosen," said Diotima to Socrates, "and by constant communion with the beloved fosters the fruit of his own soul." "Let us remain faithful to each other," thought Franz, "though the world should perish."

From seven o'clock in the morning Wagner had been waiting for Liszt in front of the post-station. They smothered each other with their embraces. Wagner wept, laughed, in a storm of joy. "There were sometimes the cries of a young eagle in his voice." Liszt scrutinized him eagerly and found him looking well, although thin. His features, especially the nose and the mouth, had taken on a remarkable fineness and expressiveness. He was dressed with a certain amount of care. They set off at once for Wagner's rooms, a comfortable

apartment on the second floor of one of the old houses of Zurich, the Escher house. New furniture had just been bought, and Liszt was delighted with these little elegances : a sofa, an armchair in green velvet, a beautiful piano, and the scores of *Rienzi*, *Tannhäuser*, and *Lohengrin*, bound in red morocco. Madame Wagner was there, stout, not handsome, but well-mannered and obliging ; she herself did the cooking for the two friends. Her husband was so excited that, twenty times a day, he threw himself on Franz's neck, sprawled on the floor to pat his dog, flung himself at the piano and, not being able to sing himself, made his parrot whistle a *motif* from *Rienzi*. He attacked the great questions :

" Art is nothing but elegy," he said, developing his favourite theme of the sufferings of the artist.

" Yes, and God crucified is a truth," replied Liszt.

Lohengrin, *Tannhäuser*, *Siegfried*—inexhaustible subjects ! Wagner's voice faltered whenever he thought and spoke of the tireless activity Franz had devoted to making his works known.

" Just see what you have made of me ; it is to you alone that I owe the little I am."

And he threw himself again in his arms. Then Liszt sat down at the keyboard and played the duet of Lohengrin and Elsa, which they sang together from one end to the other. Wagner decided to keep open house during Franz's visit. Nothing was magnificent enough for him. He was soon declaiming passages from *Rheingold*, to which his friend listened with overflowing surprise. What force in this quivering little man ! " A great, a very great nature, something like a firework Vesuvius, shooting forth sheaves of flames and bouquets of roses and lilacs."

In the evening, they went to see the poet Herwegh,

who lived in a house on the lake-shore where he shut himself up like Faust in a laboratory filled with books, optical instruments and chemical retorts. Together they planned to take an excursion on the Lake of Lucerne. The following day, however, was reserved for a solemn event: the reading of the *Nibelungen*. Wagner began this early in the afternoon. He read with incredible energy. The few friends gathered in the Escher house were fascinated, as much by the beauty of the poem itself as by this accentuated diction.

"Nothing remains now but for me to write the music," he said, as Racine remarked that nothing remained for him to do but to make the verses of a tragedy which he had entirely thought out. They launched out into comments on the composer's recent book, *Opera and Drama*. And Wagner spoke for the first time of a magnificent project, that of founding an art theatre, a *Bühnenfestspiel*, where his four-day drama would be presented. The idea entranced Liszt: "There isn't the slightest doubt of it, we must find the necessary hundred thousand francs and persuade the Grand Duke to offer you Weimar."

Herwegh and the two musicians embarked one afternoon on the steamboat on the Lake of Zurich for Brunnen, on the Lake of the Four Cantons. After a two hours' crossing and four or five hours in a carriage, they reached this village towards evening, and at dawn the next day they were carried by boat to Grutli and the chapel of William Tell. Three streams ran from the rocks, and Liszt had set his heart upon having them all swear an oath modelled on that of the three Swiss. Each of them drank from the hollowed hand of his friend as they all swore fraternity. *Schmollis* and *Brüderschaft*. But they had to ratify this at once by some great decision.

Franz thereupon told Herwegh of a plan for an oratorio, *Christus*, and begged him to compose the poem.

These friendly festivities lasted only one short week. He had to return to Weimar, where the Grand Duke had just died, leaving his succession to Karl Alexander. Wagner and Herwegh accompanied Liszt to the mail-coach, and as soon as he reached home Richard poured himself out in a letter to the friend from whom he had just parted: "After seeing ourselves torn from one another, I could not say another word to George. I returned home. Everywhere silence reigned. It was thus your departure has been commemorated, my dear friend. All joy has fled from us. Oh, come back soon! Make us a long visit. If you knew what divine traces you have left here! Everything has become nobler and sweeter; great aspirations reawaken in repressed hearts, and melancholy comes to cover everything with its veil. Adieu, my Franz, my Saint Francis. . . ."

On the outside of the diligence, Saint Francis is enveloped in his cloak, and, worn out after this week of late hours, he falls asleep leaning against the shoulder of his servant.

There are no stimulants for the artist more energizing than love and friendship. After his return, Liszt felt the need of writing notes to preserve his equilibrium. He had a sense of desiccation when he had passed several days without his music-paper. His brain was congested and he was incapable of taking any pleasure in external things. "Music is the breath of my soul; it has become at once my prayer and my work." So he composed; he was in a fever of creation, and he consumed his surplus of ideas in founding, with his friends Brendel, Ritter, the poet Herwegh and Cornelius, a magazine of art.

Richard was to be its Messiah, for from now on the whole stream of the *Zukunfts-Musik* (music of the future) turned about this advanced and solitary Pharos. And, although Wagner, unwilling to mingle with trifling literature, excused himself, he remained in spite of himself the " concentric focus " where the eyes of the new school converged. Liszt, who had experienced so keenly, even in his metaphysical being, the Wagnerian fever, that inspiring malady of the spirit, was now ravaged by it beyond any hope of recovery, any possible change of mind. " Through Wagner, modernity speaks its most intimate language : it does not conceal either its good or its evil, it has forgotten all shame in its own presence. I understand perfectly when a musician of to-day says to us : ' I hate Wagner, but I can't bear any other music any longer.' But I also understand a philosopher who should declare : ' Wagner sums up modernity. Try as one may, one has to begin by being Wagnerian.' " So spoke Nietzsche. Liszt, completely antiphilosophical, was Wagnerian by divine right, by revelation, by the laying on of hands, by his profound feeling for religion, by his tenderness for Carolyne. In his Wagnerism there was the memory of love the deliverer. It was a chapel dedicated to the ideal in the cathedral of sounds. The other musicians were no longer anything but minor saints, good and holy workers of small miracles, compared with the Prophet who struck from the rock the spring of the new gospel : that of regeneration through art. Nietzsche cried Decadence, and Liszt Redemption. Redemption, since Wagnerism was not only music, but wisdom and love also. The " musical drama " united everything, life itself. The new birth which Lamennais had in view in his mystic transports, Wagner brought about first

through art. His Credo rested on the conviction that the world has a moral significance and that its destinies are fixed outside of space and time. His doctrine springs entirely from this faith. Of what importance are temporal goods, the progress of mechanics, the accumulation of scientific knowledge? Thanks to them, not one tear the less falls into the ocean of the miseries of man. Humanity can well go to ruin, *if only this ruin is divine*. "Even though the state produced by the regeneration of the human race should be as serene as one could wish, thanks to the appeasement of our conscience, we must not forget that we should still be aware of the frightful tragedy of universal existence in the natural world about us. Therefore we must indeed lift our eyes each day to the crucified Redeemer as to our last and supreme refuge."

For the artist, the essential question, the only one perhaps, is to achieve harmony within himself. So long as he has not solved the inner problem, his genius is chiefly a danger to him. Not having mastered its language, he runs the risk of expressing himself falsely, and this, in a sincere man, is the capital sin. Up to the day when Franz opened *Tannhäuser*, this accord with himself had remained imperfect. Since then, the complementary note had suddenly rung out, giving his voice its own individual tone. What had he to fear from this last change? The composer in him had reached a complete development. It was the man who still lacked a touch. But what power he had in music belonged only to him, was derived only from himself.

Wagner and Liszt both stimulated each other so fruitfully that they could not but decide to see each other again soon. It was to be in October of this same year, and they planned to have a lark together in Paris. The

Princess and her daughter were included. And had not Franz in Paris three children whom he had not seen for many years? They bore his name: it was he who paid for their bringing up and provided for their needs. Seized with a sudden desire to embrace them, he wrote to their governess and arranged that the journey should immediately follow the music festival which he was directing at Carlsruhe. They were to meet on October 6 at Basle, at the Hotel of the Three Kings.

On the day arranged, Wagner, the first to arrive, was sitting alone in the dining-room, watching the Rhine flowing under the windows. Suddenly a vigorous chorus burst forth. It was the *motif* of the fanfare in *Lohengrin*, the summons of the King, and the double doors opened revealing Liszt, followed by a group of disciples eager to see the master's master: Hans von Bülow, Joachim, Cornelius, Pohl, Pruckner, and Rémenyi. The Princess and her daughter soon joined this gathering, which, in spite of its familiar air, had "a certain grandeur," Wagner thought, "like everything that flowed from Liszt." The Princess enraptured them with her vivacity and the interest she showed in such exalted questions as the relations of this general staff of the *Zukunfts-Musik* with the world of Philistines. Her fifteen-year-old daughter charmed them "by her dreamy air." To please her (he had a weakness for this child who represented the "wisdom of innocence"), Wagner yielded to the pleasure of reciting his poem on the *Nibelungen*. And as it could not be gone through in one evening, the reading was continued in Paris, where Liszt, Wagner, and the two ladies arrived a few days later.

They all established themselves at the Hôtel des Princes. The first evening both gentlemen broke away, paced

up and down the boulevards, deserted at this late hour, and revived old memories that were very different. For the one, it was a pleasing collection of swooning hearts and proffered lips; for the other, the barren poverty with Minna. They glanced at each other clandestinely as they passed the Opéra, where the placard announced *Robert le Diable*. Liszt was the elder: forty-two years, an almost miraculous life, a European name, that face of a man-angel which always attracted the thoughts of women, a career managed to perfection, oscillating between the pleasure of living and its justification through work. Wagner, younger by two years, seemed older with that toil-worn mask of his. He was the beginner compared with this great man who had arrived. The work he bore within him filled his head with a nervous hum.

Arm in arm, they walked through the rue du Helder, passing the apartment where Wagner had composed his *Rienzi*, the libretto of the *Flying Dutchman* and (he had to eat once a day) the four *Suites for the Cornet*. "Dear, dear Richard," said Franz, pressing his arm. Even then the brightest note in Wagner's fortune was the heart of Liszt. Before returning, they pushed on to the rue de Provence and looked up at the Mansard windows just under the roof of the latter's former lodgings. It was from up there that, one evening in the summer of 1835, the lover of Marie d'Agoult embarked on a little journey that was to last for several weeks and that now, almost twenty years later, was not yet finished.

Liszt scarcely gave a thought to Marie now save to buy the third volume of her recent work on *The Revolution of 'Forty-Eight*. She had truly made a new name for herself with that patient energy of hers, and one

could not but marvel at the accuracy of the prophecies of the sordid Lenormant. Nélida lived in solitude, her heart at peace, in the beautiful intellectual retreat which she had created. Plenty of friends had remained faithful to her and came to see her in her establishment in the Faubourg du Roule, the Maison Rose: Sainte-Beuve, Lamennais, Girardin, Lamartine, the good, pathetic Ronchaud, the cold Count de Vigny, that "national monument" the poet Mickiewicz.

Franz learned all this from Mme. Patersi, his children's teacher. He was very happy and a little embarrassed when, after a moment of conversation with her, the door opened and he had to kiss the foreheads of two young girls of fifteen and eighteen. His daughters, and beautiful into the bargain! One more success as a man! He began a little flirtation with these unknown creatures, perfectly brought up and, the younger one especially, excellent musicians. His friends must have a share in this gratifying adventure.

One evening Wagner was presented to the Demoiselles Liszt, and they made him read the last act of *Götterdämmerung*. In the middle of the recitation there was another ring at the bell. It was M. Berlioz this time, a dry little man, rather stiff, whom Liszt had also invited. Wagner and he shook hands without too much sympathy, and the declamation continued. Berlioz listened and probably understood none of it, but nevertheless his shrivelled face tried to be amiable. He invited Franz and his friend to breakfast the following day, for he was about to set off for a concert tour in Germany.

So they met again in his little apartment in the rue Boursault. In spite of his poverty and his anxieties

("Ophelia" had been agonizing for weeks in a little house at Montmartre), Berlioz, always by some inner necessity boastful, kept up a rapid fire of puns, indulged in fireworks, and predicted his own triumph in Germany. After the dessert, Liszt sat down at the piano and played fragments of *Cellini*, which Berlioz sang in his dry, original way. The extraordinary and savage character of Berlioz's conceptions, the intensity of the sensations and certain curious weaknesses produced upon Wagner a mixed but profound impression. Behind all these things there was certainly a man of great value, almost an equal. And there was Liszt, the author of the *Sonata in B-Minor*, the dear, the delicious Liszt, spending himself with all his might exalting the music of Berlioz!

One evening of course had to be spent at the opera. Wagner got into his evening dress without enthusiasm, and once they were there all the women turned to look at Franz. In the green-room they found a few faces they knew and other memories they had forgotten. Wagner recalled the unfortunate hearing of his *Défense d'aimer* by Scribe in this same green-room; Liszt, the ridiculous occasion of his *Castle of Love*. A more stimulating impression was that left upon Wagner by the Morin-Chevillard Quartette Society. "In Paris alone," he tells us, "I learned really to know the *Quartette in C-sharp-Minor* of Beethoven, and for the first time I clearly understood his melody. If this visit had left me only this one memory, it would have sufficed to make this epoch important and unforgettable." Henceforth he regarded the *scherzo* of this quartette as the greatest masterpiece in all music. This experience forms a pendant to his initiation into the *Ninth Symphony*, received fourteen years earlier at the Conservatory concerts. It

was then that " the image divined in his youthful dreams " had first dawned upon him, and " the decadent period of his taste had come to an end in shame and repentance."

Franz arranged another dinner at the Palais-Royal at which his three children appeared. Daniel struck everyone by his vivacity and his great resemblance to his father. The young girls sat close beside each other, like two frightened doves.

All too soon, however, he was obliged to set out again for Weimar, and once more for Wagner the farewell was like a rending of the heart. Liszt carried home with him Carolyne and the Princess Marie, called Magne, or Magnolette, who was the same age as Cosima and of whom he was very fond. He had scarcely reached the Altenburg when the first letter arrived from Wagner, who was remaining a few days longer in Paris. " Behold me still following you with a fixed eye. My whole being is silence. You must permit me, even when I am with you, to dispense with seeking for words. Language seems to me to exist only to do violence to one's feelings. And so, no constraint, but silence. . . . Ah ! I am all feeling, so much so that the mind in me is lost in the heart ; and the things of the heart I cannot write."

As for the Mademoiselles Liszt, they had adopted this strange friend whom chance had given to them. And a few days later, on October 22 (a sacred date, for it was the anniversary of their father's birth), he invited them to Erard's, where they found certain friends assembled. A concert piano stood wide open. The gathering was to celebrate the best-beloved, the saint of saints, Saint Francis Liszt. Consequently, he was going to play the most beautiful thing he knew. He attacked *Tannhäuser*.

XIX

Agnes, or the Music of Silence—The Gran Mass

OF the ten or so disciples who surrounded the master of Weimar at the Altenburg, one was especially beloved: Hans von Bülow. This young man had been introduced to Liszt by Wagner. He had come from Switzerland in the spring of 1851, without a penny, strong in his single vocation for music. Having deserted Berlin, his family and his studies at the law, Bülow had first hunted out the exile at Zurich, who had amused himself by lending him for a short while a conductor's baton. The experiment succeeded. Bülow not only had a genius for the orchestra, but at the mere contact with Wagner his whole being was exalted. The will of this young enthusiast triumphed first over the technical difficulties, then over the resistance of his family. So they sent him to Liszt, begging the latter to determine whether he should be a pianist, kapellmeister, or composer. Liszt declared that he should be a pianist, and established this new pupil in his house.

He had not been mistaken. In two years, Bülow became a pianist of the first rank; more, an incomparable friend, one of those faithful and devoted souls that spring up around great men. The name of Bülow soon began to be known throughout Germany as that of one of the best artists, one of the boldest too, because of his programmes, in which the works of the new masters never failed to figure. He went about stirring up the orchestra conductors, combating the recalcitrants, imposing on them Wagner's operas or the symphonic poems

of Liszt and quickly becoming the foremost ambassador of that violent little race, the " musicians of the future." He was an impulsive creature, now at the height of good spirits, now utterly cast down, a sarcastic, correct soul, a very well-brought-up young German. Of the coterie at the Altenburg it was he who spoke the best French, an indispensable qualification for following the conversations of the Princess and Liszt, who always talked together in this tongue. By zealous effort, he reached the point where he too could express himself gracefully and easily in it. " Accept the reiterated expression of my profound gratitude for all the kindnesses you have heaped upon me," he wrote to Liszt at the opening of the year 1854. " Pray count upon my entire devotion, body and soul, to your person, and make use of it if the occasion presents itself some day. In recapitulating the last year, so rich in events for my career as man and artist . . . in reflecting on my future and the progress I have been able to make towards this future, I am filled through and through, not with a feeling of wounded self-esteem, but on the contrary with the liveliest pride, when I recognize that the best I have in me is the creation of the divine breath of your art." This was a first expression of the thanksgivings this faithful among the faithful chanted to his God. Hans von Bülow was soon appointed first professor of piano music at the Conservatory in Berlin, where he settled with his mother.

It then occurred to Princess Carolyne to bring Liszt and his daughters together, and she advised him to place them as boarders with Frau von Bülow. They were living such solitary lives in Paris, where Mme. d'Agoult could scarcely see them except clandestinely, that they

accepted without too much displeasure this change in their destiny. On August 22, 1855, they arrived at the Altenburg and found their father playing whist. (The Princess had just left, in her turn, for Paris.) The family flirtation began again, as once before in the rue Casimir-Perier. The first night they chattered till half-past one. Liszt kept his mornings absolutely to himself to work on his *Psalm* and remain faithful to the routine of composition he had established. For several weeks the daily programme was devoted to walks, readings and games. But, before going to bed, Franz faithfully wrote his daily letter to that infinitely dear mistress whom he guided from afar in her visits to the old friends in France: Delacroix, Ary Scheffer, George Sand, Sainte-Beuve. Frau von Bülow came in search of these young ladies in September and carried them off to Berlin. It was understood that Hans was to take charge of their musical instruction, and Liszt enjoined him to make them work seriously. He had found them farther advanced than he thought, though rather given to day-dreaming. They must be made good propagandists for the *Zukunfts-Musik*. Hans did not fail to do so, as we may judge from the following:

"My very dear and illustrious Master,—A thousand thanks for the happiness you have brought me by sending me your *Psalm*. It is a sublime work: it is you who are the true founder of the *Zukunfts-Kirchenmusik*, and I bow before the author of this masterpiece which, by its nobility and its sincere and profound religious spirit, cannot fail to deliver its message to whosoever approaches it with a little intelligence and without too materialistic a soul. . . . You ask me, my dear master, to give you the news of Mlles. Liszt. Up to the present this would have been impossible owing to the state of stupefaction, admiration, and even exaltation, to which they have reduced me, especially the younger. As for their musical ability,

it is not talent, but genius. . . . Last evening, Mlle. Blandine played Bach's *Sonata in A*, and Mlle. Cosima Beethoven's *Sonata in E-flat*. I make them work also at four-hand arrangements of instrumental works for the piano. I analyse the pieces for them, and I put too much rather than too little pedantry into my surveillance over their studies. . . . I shall never forget the delicious evening when I played and played again your *Psalm* to them. The two angels were almost on their knees and are overwhelmed with adoration for their father. They understand your masterpieces better than any one else, and truly you have in them a public bestowed on you by nature. How moved and touched I was in recognizing you, *ipsissimum Lisztum*, in the playing of Mlle. Cosima."

Meanwhile, after an interregnum of several months devoted to journeys and composition, Liszt had taken up again his conductor's baton at the Weimar theatre. Although he could never hope for more than slight results in this small and rather dull town, he yet persisted in forcing upon it the works of his own choice: Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*, *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin*, and *Cellini* and *William Tell*. The court was still in mourning, a fact that was apparent in the many empty stalls. But Liszt did not allow himself to be disheartened by the indifference and the criticism that had succeeded the enthusiasm of the first years. He had faith in his art, in Wagner, in himself. This was enough. Just at this time he had received from Zurich the first two acts of *Die Walküre*, which he thought miraculous. All Germany might pronounce them anathema, but this could not affect the friend shut up in his room in Switzerland like a silk-worm in its cocoon: the friend who was working, and struggling; for all he had to live on were the meagre sums that dribbled in from the few scattered productions of his operas. He still sometimes abandoned himself to despair: "Often I suddenly feel

that when all is said and done the best thing for me would be to die." But immediately after: "Ah! this has nothing to do with the music that I have to write." Liszt hastened to Leipzig, stimulated the zeal of a manager, besieged his friend's publishers, went the rounds of the patrons of art in Dresden, and ended by sending from his own pocket the money that no one could make up his mind to advance. "Everything that was possible is done; as for the impossible, you will do that in *Rheingold*. How far have you got in it? Am I to have the score in May, as you promised? Come, to work!" Before the constancy of this faith, the other cried: "Thank you, O my beloved Christ, my yule-tide! I regard you as my Saviour himself, and it is with the title of Saviour that I have placed your image over the altar of my work."

But all those who are in need of money know very well that to-morrow is just as pressing as to-day. The sums sent by Franz brought Wagner a respite, but not peace of mind. Love? He renounced it. Art? It was only a makeshift. Necessity obliged him to get out of his difficulties through art, but simply in order to go on living. "*Rheingold* is finished, but I am finished too. . . . It is only with a veritable despair that I return to art. If I create art, if I must renounce reality once more, if I must fall back into the waves where the artist's fantasy flounders, if I must content myself with a merely imaginary world, at least people must come to the aid of my fantasy and sustain my imagination. In this case I cannot live like a dog, I cannot lie down in the straw and delight in drinking cheap brandy; in some way or other I must feel myself made much of if they wish my mind to bring to a successful issue that work which is

the most grievous and difficult of all: the creation of a world that does not exist." Then followed, once more, the everlasting cry: "Listen, Franz. You must come to my aid. My affairs are going badly, very badly. If they want me to recover the power to *endure* (I mean many things by this word), the prostitution of my art, this sinister road on which I have set out, must lead to something adequate or I am lost. Have you not thought again of Berlin?"

What he meant by "Berlin" was the production of *Tannhäuser* and *Lohengrin* at the Royal Opera under the direction of Liszt, the sole person authorized by Wagner as able to bring this enterprise to a successful issue. (Placing it in the hands of others had already cost him dear.) But Herr von Hülsen, the director-general, obstinately refused without being willing to offer any explanations. Wagner was equally obstinate, and would not yield. Neither would Liszt, who knew better than anyone to what artistic and financial disasters his friend would expose himself if he abandoned his dramas to the first manager who came along. Even the Princess counselled resistance. "Let Liszt do it. Leave Berlin entirely, completely, to him. It may mean a long wait, but it will go well—above all, *properly*. . . . Write us at length, it will do good to all our three united and indivisible hearts. The whole atmosphere of the Altenburg shines softly when there has been a letter from you." Wagner, however, was gradually, slowly, tempted. This Berlin offered the sole hope of a harvest. After Berlin, twenty other towns would be willing to produce his pieces. Berlin was therefore indispensable. And to justify himself in his own eyes for his first sin against the spirit and against the heart, he repudiated his *Tann-*

häuser, he repudiated his *Lohengrin*, threw them to the winds, would no longer hear them spoken of. Delivered over to the trade of strolling singers, they were cursed by him, condemned to beg for him, to serve merely as bowls for catching alms.

If he still resisted a little, it was because he had discovered Schopenhauer and in Schopenhauer the fortitude of sorrow and, deep in its heart, Liszt. "In vain, because you are religious, you have expressed your ideas otherwise. In spite of this, I am quite certain that you think exactly as I do. What profundity is yours! In reading Schopenhauer, I was almost always near you in thought. . . . Thus I am becoming every day more mature. Art concerns me now only as a pastime, a sport." Such was the excuse which he pleaded before yielding to the proposals from Berlin and delivering up his repudiated children to the mercy of chance. What did Liszt say? He had, as Wagner well knew, a right to be deeply offended, for the veto of the director-general was aimed more at Franz, the declared chief of the musicians of the future, than at himself. He thought of sending his wife to see Liszt. But Franz replied without any appearance of bitterness: "I gladly leave to your friends in Berlin whatever satisfaction they may find in this solution, and I hope that soon other occasions will present themselves when my co-operation will be useful and agreeable to you."

Liszt had to take his revenge by giving in Berlin itself a concert entirely devoted to his own works. His friend Bülow took charge of it. It swiftly assumed the proportions of an event in this city through which, fifteen years before, the pianist had passed in triumph. But if, as a young man, he had been "master" there, this time he

came back as a "servant." Accompanied by his daughters, whom it pleased him to exhibit a little everywhere, he was present at the rehearsals and at several dinners given in his honour, and, without betraying on his face the suffering the thorns caused him, he allowed himself to be crowned with roses. For of these thorns he had many, and, although hidden, they were sharp enough. Another surprise awaited him. As he was going out of the concert-hall after a rehearsal, Bülow swept him off for a walk "Unter den Linden." He seemed very much embarrassed, bashful. And suddenly: "My dear master . . . How shall I tell you? . . . I have the honour to ask you for the hand of Mlle. Cosima." Liszt stopped short, thunderstruck. Then he opened his arms to the man whom for a long time now he had been pleased to call his son. The plan, however, had to be kept secret for a while. As for Blandine, she had refused three proposals in succession. Had she left her heart in Paris?

As he had expected, the concert unloosed a thunder of applause in the hall and a tempest of criticism in the Press. A double effect which artists know well. "It appears," wrote one of the great judges in summing up the opinion of the classical school, "it appears that Liszt is really unable to convince himself of his incapacity." Franz smiled, strong in the faith of his genius and his Christian humility. To him whose self-esteem had experienced so many gratifications through all Europe these increasing mortifications seemed almost just. They were the blows of a discipline that whipped his blood, nothing else. "I hope," he wrote to Wagner, "that the lashings I have received from the critics will be of benefit to your *Tannhäuser*, and that the impression which this work cannot fail to produce on the public will

not suffer too much from the attacks of a malevolent Press."

With more confidence than ever he set to work again composing. The Cardinal-Primate of Hungary entrusted him with the writing of a grand mass for the consecration of the cathedral of Gran, and he worked on this with fervour. The *Kyrie* and the *Gloria* were soon finished. And this in spite of a life whose happiness had begun to decline. Is this the right word? Not so much the happiness, perhaps, as the enthusiasm, the joy. He was less young in spirit. He shared keenly Carolyne's great desire to unite her life with his, but he was less concerned about it. He desired it more for her sake than for his own. A sort of indifference to everything that was not an idea began to envelop him. Instead of suffering he watched himself suffer, and instead of loving he let himself be loved. This does not mean that he no longer felt. His instinct for conquest was as keen as ever, but it was stripped of those beautiful exigencies which, from the point of view of the soul, give it its true value. The love-passion, wrapped round with security, is transmuted into love-tenderness. Henceforth, this was the word that came most frequently from Franz's pen: tenderness, benignity. "I live steeped in your tenderness and entirely encompassed by it." "I thank you and bless you." "Your blessing greeted me on the threshold of this house which your love and your tenderness have transformed into a heaven on earth for my heart. You are my music and my prayer, now and always."

The death of the Tsar brought Carolyne a few weeks of hope in regard to her divorce, but his successor showed himself just as immovable. She was obliged to resign herself again, take more steps, plead, wait. Happily,

Liszt was composing and working every morning, sometimes from six o'clock on. He suffered less than the Princess from this enforced concubinage. Had not Goethe taken twenty years to regularize his liaison? In the afternoon he went out for long walks which almost always led him to Weimar, where calls delayed him. As a rule, he turned towards the Karlplatz. There, just beside the theatre, was a little apartment with two windows where a white form seemed to wait. As soon as the great man appeared, the casements closed, the curtains were drawn. Liszt would hastily run up to the rooms of his favourite pupil. Did she have to work so hard that her lesson was always prolonged so late? It was true that this charming Agnes was destined for the teaching profession. She was from Hanover, but she had passed her whole life in Paris, and wore delightful toilettes that made the ladies of Weimar chatter. She and Liszt talked French, literature and the rest.

Was this love? Ah, why raise such questions at once? One can love by vocation. One can love love, which does not necessarily imply that one loves. And then, even when one has made a gift of oneself, something of oneself is always left over. Otherwise, what would be the use of being richer and more generous than others? It did not even occur to Franz that anyone could reproach him for this. Was not the fact that he had been loved by others flattering for her whom he loved? The *poste-restante*, the little clandestine larks, the secret meetings at Düsseldorf, Gotha, Frankfort, all this was the joy of being still young, the intimate poetry that consists in peopling a whole country with secret memories. In the hotel at Gotha, Agnes and he had read together the magnificent passage from the *Evenings in St. Petersburg*

on the Psalms ; at Cassel, Dante (always this Dante, who pursued him from woman to woman).

Another excellent thing was to be able to express himself without the least constraint. With Agnes there was no obligatory pitch to be maintained. He never had to tune himself to a given key. He was completely himself. And when, after a few seasons, she in turn had left the Grand Duchy to travel, they had already formed the habit of speaking to each other pen in hand. " Although I continue to write to you, there are nevertheless many things of which I no longer speak to you. I long to have news of you. You know very well that I do not want to be a burden upon you—so do not write to me except when you have the time for it—but write to me always then, out of the fullness of your heart." " Your heart is not mistaken, I have never really left you." " Your letters are sweet and dear to me, and you do a kind deed when you think of me, for I am mortally sad and weary." " I always have the same things to tell you in the same silences. My heart is bruised and consumed incessantly in some indescribable infinite expectation." " Pray for me and remain kind and understanding."

In hours of discouragement, Franz found the strength to pour himself out to this restful spirit. If sometimes, in the midst of his work, his peace of mind was overthrown by the injustice of the public, by the sort of hatred with which he felt himself surrounded in the musical world, or even by some sharper pain like the brutal intellectual attack which he suffered one day at the hands of Joachim, whom he himself had launched into fortune, ah, then it soothed him to turn to the mind of this Agnes, who never had a demand or a reproach for him. " Thank

you for your tenderness, your kindness and all that grace of simplicity and inner poetry that captivates me," he wrote to her. "My whole life is attached to this corner of the earth (Weimar), and I hope to find here the last and the supreme good: a death that will be calm and resplendent with the ardours of the faith."

The *Gran Mass* was worked out and finished in a mystical transport. Franz could say that in writing it he had prayed rather than composed. For two months he scarcely left the Blue Room and the little adjacent oratory. Yet this Mass only brought him a new sorrow, the secret and powerful hostility of his friend Prince Festetics, who brought every effort to bear on the Cardinal-Primate to prevent its execution. This music-mad grandee had a mass of his own to present! Liszt's carried the day, in spite of all, and he himself arrived, at the end of August, 1856, at Gran, the metropolis of Catholicism in Hungary.

There was first a solemn reception at Pest, to the usual cries of "Eljen Liszt!" A popular festival, for it was understood now that the composer was "an integral part of the national pride." Then, on the eve of the great day, Liszt was present at a low mass and prayed for the absent mistress and the dear Magnolette. At last, on August 31, four thousand listeners were gathered in the basilica, among them the Emperor and the Archduke. Liszt lifted his baton to direct the first of his great religious works.

"A revolution!" people whispered. "A great *coup d'Eglise*," said Bülow. A new field for art, thought Liszt, a limitless field and one for which he felt an irresistible vocation growing within him. "The composer of Church music is also a preacher and a priest," he said. "Where speech fails music comes and brings

one a new faith, a new transport." Palestrina, Lassus, Bach, and Beethoven, such were the masters he aspired to succeed. He had already made his first attempt in this sacred music in the *Thirteenth Psalm* for solos, choir and orchestra, composed during this same period "with tears of blood."

"How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?
Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;
Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.
But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.
I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me."

Words in which were summed up the affliction of his only and infinitely dear mistress, the sorrows of Liszt and that firm hope which never left his trustful soul. The same season, the same emotions gave birth to the fugue on the name of B-A-C-H and the *Gran Mass*. A solemn mass of which the six grand divisions, admirable in structure, of a striking unity in conception, are formed by the development of characteristic themes that run through the work and co-ordinate the parts according to a musical system utilized by Liszt in his symphonic poems. This wholly new, mystical, dramatic form was a reproach to Liszt in the eyes of those who thought that human suffering had nothing to learn from the mystery of the divine sacrifice. But into what could the musician put his heart if not into this? A strange sort of criticism! Is not this what the music sings in its depths

under the eye of God, to the repentant sinner? Franz could not hold himself strictly to plain-song and liturgical development without condemning himself to writing nothing but occasional pieces. But it was a prayer that he had composed. Beethoven has done the same thing in his *Mass in D* and Wagner in his *Parsifal*. Liszt, however, commits an error, that of shutting his work up under the vaults of a cathedral where the freedom of his exposition produces the effect of disorder. All the force and passion are lost in the vast resonance of the basilica. Plain-song, on the other hand, with its powerful unison, its simple or massive harmonies of the *faux bourdon*, balances itself and adapts itself to the architectural arrangements. There indeed is that "pitched and religious harmony" of which Montaigne speaks and which blends so well with "the sombre vastness of our churches, the diversity of the ornaments and the order of the ceremonies, and with the devout sound of our organs."

The *Gran Mass* provoked violent criticism because of all the harmonic audacities, the new dissonant forms (notably in the *Crucifixus*) which it contained—forms in which Liszt was already employing clashes of seconds, like our most recent composers. The Emperor cared little for it, but the Cardinal-Primate delighted in it. This prelate invited the author to dine at his palace in company with some sixty high dignitaries and offered him a toast in Latin.

Liszt then made a visit to the Franciscan monastery at Pest, where he was well liked. They made him heartily welcome. They received him into the Third Order, founded by Saint Francis on the day when he preached to the birds. Blessed day when Brother Masseo came

and delivered the Lord's message to the Poor Man of Assisi: "It is not for yourself alone that you have been called, but that you may gather an abundant harvest of souls and that God may win many by your mediation." So was born that Third Order, for the salvation of all men, in all conditions of life. To enter it was for Franz the accomplishment of an old and dear desire. More than ever one sees him anxious to cultivate his soul. Henceforth, it was a question of tracing his way back to the foundations, as Lacordaire called it, "penetrating to those living sources that spring up into eternal life."

XX

The Dante and Faust Symphonies

"EXCELLENT Franz . . . Your symphonic poems have become completely familiar to me: they are the only music I am interested in. Every day I read from end to end one or another of your scores as I would read a poem, calmly, without stopping. It is like plunging every time into a deep, limpid sea where I become entirely myself, forget the whole world and live for an hour my own true life. Refreshed and fortified, I then reascend to the surface and sigh for your presence. Yes, yes, you knew what you were about there, you knew what you were about there! You must come soon and bring me *my* Dante. Beautiful, marvellous prospect! Bring the Princess, do you hear? And the child must come, too. Always and eternally, your Richard Wagner."

But Liszt was travelling with his Mass, from Gran to Budapest, from Prague to Stuttgart. In this city he lingered awhile, for he was staying with one of the loveliest women of the international great world, the White Fairy of Théophile Gautier, the swan of Heinrich Heine, the beautiful Marie Kalergis, in fact, one of Chopin's favourite pupils. For more than ten years, Liszt had been a very dear friend of this great lady virtuoso. They were both solitaries, migratory birds, and they were the two earliest followers of Wagner. Nomads whose sole fatherland was art and a few amorous memories scattered across musical Europe. Marie Kalergis, born the Countess Nesselrode, was half Polish, half Russian, like Carolyne, who had double and perhaps triple reasons for

being jealous of her. Had not this "swan-woman" had the joy of nursing Liszt once when he had fallen ill at Bonn? Was it not whispered that she belonged to the secret diplomatic corps of the Tsar? And above all, was she not dazzlingly beautiful? However it may have been, she pretended to be weary of the dissonances of the "European concert" in which she had held one of the leading parts, she spoke of building herself a hermitage in Baden and played duets with Liszt, his *Préludes* and his *Orpheus*. At thirty-four it was said of her, as it had been said at twenty:

"De quel mica de neige vierge,
De quelle moelle de roseau,
De quelle hostie et de quel cierge
A-t-on fait le blanc de sa peau?

A-t-on pris la goutte lactée
Tachant l'azur du ciel d'hiver,
Le lis à la pulpe argentée
La blanche écume de la mer;

. . . L'ivoire où ses mains ont des ailes,
Et, comme des papillons blancs,
Sur la pointe des notes frêles,
Suspendent leurs baisers tremblants . . ."

With some difficulty Liszt tore himself away from this goddess of the "major mode of white" in whom music had placed a beautiful red heart, and at last he reached Zurich carrying under his arm the score his friend had demanded. They had scarcely embraced each other when Wagner sat down at his piano. The finale of the *Faust-Symphony*, which he already knew, had convinced him of his friend's "magistral power of conception." The recollection of Margaret floated there, pure and light, without forcing the attention by any

violent means. The *Dante-Symphony*, in turn, filled him with astonishment. What a mine of hidden treasures was this man, swarming with happy finds and with crudities, suddenly interrupted by utterly commonplace spots of which his genius was quite unaware! It lit in Wagner's mind a veritable constellation of ideas. Then behold, suddenly, an emphatic *motif* succeeding the sweet and soaring *Magnificat*.

"No, no, not that!" he exclaimed. "Take that out. None of the majestic Lord God! Preserve that vague, delicate wavering."

"You are right," Liszt replied. "That was my idea, too. The Princess felt differently about it. But it shall be done as you advise."

This Princess—Wagner had already begun to distrust her, nestling as she was there in that "heart of art," where he proposed to dwell alone with his friend. But how could he keep any bitterness against the strange creature when she arrived a few days later? Her Polish and patrician grace, her whimsical ways, captivated even the difficult Minna Wagner. The Hôtel Baur-au-Lac, where she took rooms, at once became the centre of an animation that spread through the whole town. There were nothing but comings and goings of carriages and servants, dinners, evening parties, and one saw appearing from all sides any number of personages whom no one had ever suspected of living in Zurich: Winterberger, a pupil of Liszt, Kirchner, a passionate admirer of Schumann, who played the eccentric, Köchly and ten other professors from the university, the architect Semper, the shy Sulzer (a Winterthur manufacturer), the Wesendoncks, Heim, the cantatrice, Doctor Wille, and that old friend, Herwegh. An agreeable atmosphere

of liberty and unconstraint prevailed about the Princess. In the intimate gatherings at Frau Wagner's, she helped the latter to serve the guests.

October 22, always a solemn date, was particularly brilliant this time, and the Princess collected at the hotel all the persons of mark that Zurich could offer. A telegram from Weimar brought a long poem which Herwegh recited at the beginning of the evening. Then Liszt sat down at the piano, Mme. Heim on his right, Wagner on his left, and they sang the whole first act of a work which no one yet knew: *Die Walküre*. The enthusiasm was so great that, in spite of their fatigue, they also sang a scene from the second act. Following this, Richard and Franz played with two pianos a symphonic work of Liszt. Supper, to bring it to an end, champagne, "petit cognac," speeches and discussions. Goethe's *Egmont* was mentioned. Wagner admired it; Liszt disliked it because the hero allowed himself to be deceived. The music had thrown their nerves into such a state that in the midst of an agonized silence the two composers insulted each other, face glaring at face, distorted with passion. A superb moment which no one wished to spoil by a word. Then the violence suddenly died down in a mutual stupor. But the two friends retained for the rest of their lives the obscure feeling that if once a dispute broke out between them it would be as terrible as love.

On another day, at Herwegh's, Liszt became enamoured of a piano that was horribly out of tune. The poet wished to make a precipitate search for a good one, but what a mistake this would have been! Liszt adored discordant pianos. He improvised best on them. The dissonances stood out with an exquisite brilliance,

and the modulations connected themselves in the most unexpected way. "It was so beautiful," said Wagner, "that we ceased to think of it as magic—it was sorcery." While Liszt accompanied Wagner back to his house, the latter confided to him the sorrows of his conjugal life. And Liszt, after these painful confessions of his dearest friend, stopped, seized him in his arms, and, without saying a word, pressed his lips upon Wagner's. The memory of this moment never left them.

Before long, the whole little circle set out on the road for Saint-Gall, where they were going to spend eight days inaugurating the concerts of the new conductor. The Princess invited everybody to the Hôtel du Brochet. Wagner and his wife had a room beside that of Princess Carolyne. But on the first night, the latter was seized with one of her stifling fits of hysteria, and, to drive away the hallucinations that tormented her, Magnolette began reading aloud to her. Wagner woke up and irritably rapped on the wall. The reading went on. He tried to restrain his anger. But at two o'clock in the morning, unable to contain himself any longer, he fell into a state of indescribable excitement, struck the wall without stopping, roused the servants, and paced the corridor in his night-shirt. He arranged to have a room at the other end of the hotel, and went and complained to Liszt, who was sleeping peacefully. The following day, neither the Princess Marie nor Franz, who were long accustomed to these extravagances, seemed in the least embarrassed.

With the little Saint-Gall orchestra, Liszt repeated his *Préludes* and his *Orpheus*, the execution of which was truly captivating. Wagner placed *Orpheus*, so restrained in form, first among the works of Liszt. As for the

public it was particularly excited by the *Préludes*. Wagner conducted Beethoven's *Eroïca* "with much pain," for on such occasions he always had chills and fever. But the two men were anxious to judge each other at the conductor's desk. Each observed the other "with an attention and interest that were truly instructive." On both sides, the impression was just and profound.

There was a banquet in the evening. There was another banquet the following day. At the house of a local Mæcenas, Liszt played Beethoven's *Grand Sonata in B-flat-Major*. Kirchner declared:

"We have the right to say that we have just been present at something that did not seem possible, and I still believe in the impossibility of that which, nevertheless, we have heard."

"The originality of Liszt," Wagner added, "consists in his giving, himself, at the piano what others construct with pen and paper."

At last, on the eve of their departure, to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the marriage of Wagner with Minna, these marvellous children paced by couples from one end to the other of the Hôtel du Brochet in a vast Polonaise, while Liszt made the piano ring with the "Wedding March" from *Lohengrin*.

Behold Wagner, alone again, toiling at his *Siegfried* and reading the correspondence of Schiller and Goethe. "This book," he wrote to Magnolette, "has become a sort of consecration of our friendship. I rarely read what is actually before my eyes, but rather what I put into it myself. So here I have been reading of all I should be able to create, evoke and develop with Liszt if we were together. Our exceptional relations of

friendship—I have read of them in letters of gold. . . ." And to Liszt himself: "Your friendship is the great event of my life."

Liszt, on his side, continued to act on behalf of him whose glory seemed to him to be the honour of a people. He wrote to the young Grand Duke: "It is my duty, sire, to call your attention anew to something most important, and I approach the matter without any preamble. For the honour and in the interest of the protection which Your Royal Highness accords to the fine arts, as well as for the honour of taking the initiative and assuming precedence in these matters, which I dare beg you to claim for Weimar, as far as possible, it seems to me not only suitable but necessary and almost indispensable that the *Nibelungenring* of Wagner should have its first performance at Weimar. No doubt this performance is far from simple and easy; it would be necessary to take exceptional measures, as, for instance, the construction of a theatre and the engagement of a personnel *ad hoc* that would conform to Wagner's intentions: difficulties and obstacles might be encountered, but it is my opinion, after weighing everything thoroughly, that if Your Royal Highness were sufficiently interested to desire it seriously these matters would settle themselves. As for the material and moral result, I do not hesitate to hold myself responsible for its being in all respects such that Your Highness would have reason to be satisfied with it. The work of Wagner, which is half finished and will be completely achieved in two years, will dominate this epoch as the most monumental effort of contemporary art; it is unprecedented, marvellous and sublime. How much to be deplored then are the evil conditions of mediocrity that reign

and govern and succeed in preventing it from shining and radiating over the world!"

But Karl Alexander had something very different on his mind: a triple monument to his grandfather, to Goethe and to Schiller which was to be dedicated with a festival in the approaching month of September. The musical programme was placed in Liszt's hands. In the interim he had to bear several new decisive defeats at Leipzig and Vienna, where they hissed his compositions, which he had gone to conduct. At Aix-la-Chapelle, his friend Hiller, an old comrade of twenty years' standing, himself gave the signal for an anti-Lisztian manifestation. But he who could so easily have taken a spectacular revenge would not consent to demean himself. The pianist in him was completely dead. He could not comprehend why so few artists realized that he was eager to strive for a higher aim. It astonished him. "Am I not nobly good-natured enough," he thought, "for the whole artistic world?" Ah, that is precisely what is not forgiven!

Happily, Wagner knew it, said it, proclaimed it in the newspapers, which meant more than anything else to this soul in which love demanded love. He had to give himself in order to possess. Looking back on the evenings at Saint-Gall, Franz confessed to Richard: "Your radiant glance filled my soul with rich light, reconciled it with itself and enveloped it in caresses." Ophelia is still loved, certainly, "but Hamlet, like every exceptional character, imperiously demands of her the *wine* of love, and is not contented with a little milk. He wishes to be understood, but without submitting to the necessity of explaining himself." Not a little milk, but wine: that is the demand of this Lohengrin

who is always ready to re-embark in the swan-drawn boat. No explanation, but comprehension. What he lacked at the Altenburg in the way of new desires, silences, even sufferings, he could only find henceforth in the land of the ideal.

This year 1857 was a year of love for the whole Liszt family. Cosima was married to Hans von Bülow on August 18, in Berlin. And Blandine, who had left for a visit with her mother in Paris, became engaged there to the lawyer Émile Ollivier, whom she married in Florence on the sacred day, October 22. Franz was present at the marriage of the younger and left to Nélida the joy of marrying off the elder. As for himself, his work of love for this year was the *Faust-Symphony* and *Die Ideale*.

They were given for the first time during the festivities of the centenary of Karl August, the prince-protector of the arts. During these three days at the beginning of September, Weimar was packed with poets, musicians, and the curious. All the windows were rented that overlooked the passing procession. As Liszt and the Princess appeared at theirs, in the house of some friends, the fine ladies quickly drew back in order not to be obliged to bow to the illegal couple. From that moment, Franz and Carolyne discontinued all relations with the society of Weimar. At the grand concert on September 5, *Die Ideale* was coldly received. But the public could not resist the *Faust-Symphony*. It was Liszt's masterpiece, his Ninth Symphony, that perfect fruit which the best of plants produces only once. Moreover, it came at the right moment and constituted a dramatic prologue of immense significance for the new forms of instrumental music. At the same time that it closed the album

of programme-music, the *Faust-Symphony* opened the book of the great musical syntheses. Its three parts, Faust, Margaret, Mephistopheles, while they sketched three absolutely different characters, preserved, thanks to their thematic unity, all the grandeur of a single drama. "I am he who searches," says the man. "I am she who loves," says the woman. "And I," says the Devil, "I am he who denies." As the arbiter of this conflict, Liszt brings it to a conclusion as lover and mystic with a chorus that proclaims the virtue of the "eternal feminine." "The eternal feminine leads us onward and upward." Such was the determined Credo of this faithful believer. "In giving this to the crowd to-day," Wagner wrote to him, "reflect that you are doing exactly what we do when we wear out our bodies, our looks and our lives before the eyes of the world. We do not expect them to come back to us, loved and understood by all."

Liszt had given everything now, from the depths of his rare heart. He no longer expected anything much in return. He had reached the point where to receive no longer gives us happiness.

For a long time now, Karl Alexander had dreamed of nothing but the laurels of his grandfather. He proposed to make the Weimar theatre once more what it had been in the time of Goethe, without perceiving for a moment that for the past ten years this theatre had become the most important musical centre in Europe. He never suspected that the conductor of his orchestra was coveted by all the courts of Germany. He wanted plays, not all this music of the future which made the journalists laugh. And it was to "that good, that excellent friend Liszt" that he appealed to find the

director-general capable of restoring to the Weimarian scene its former lustre. Liszt chose Herr von Dingelstedt, who soon arrived and set himself to the task. In a few months he produced a series of bad plays, pleasing in their mediocrity and admirably remunerative. This meant that the place left for music was reduced to a minimum. This Dingelstedt was a clever, insinuating man, supercilious and fine-spoken. As long as the court remained faithful to Liszt, he too showed himself friendly, even assiduous in his attentions. But when the Dowager Grand Duchess died and Karl Alexander aspired to play the rôle of his ancestor, in more princely fashion, the director-general threw off his mask. With one stroke of his pen he crossed off from his budget the new credits demanded for music. Liszt saw it all coming and realized that he would have to renounce positively the laughable project of offering the *Nibelungenring* to the people of Weimar. He caused Lassen to be appointed assistant conductor and barricaded himself in a stricter solitude at the Altenburg.

For a long time he did not leave it except to travel. Now it was a Mozart festival which he went to Vienna to direct, now his Mass, which he took up again at Pest, or a visit to a new friend of the *Zukunfts-Musik*, Prince von Hohenzollern-Hechingen, who invited him to his castle of Löwenberg in Silesia. For the rest, he lived in the circle of his pupils, of whom Tausig, Bronsart, Klindworth, Rubinstein and Cornelius were the most notable. The Princess applied herself to writing, just like Mme. d'Agoult. But more and more her mind was becoming occupied with religious problems alone. Deep in the smoke of her black cigars, she was sketching out a work entitled *Buddhism and Christianity*, while Franz

noted down the first two drafts of his *Saint Elizabeth*. But, in spite of this double activity, there was something—not indeed between them, but in the surrounding atmosphere, in the spiritual air of Weimar—that portended a new change in their destinies. It is not always with his reason or his intelligence that man hears the note of warning: sometimes his very senses, his superstitions warn him better and arouse him in time. "I am still a part of this world," thought Liszt, "without quite knowing why. My mind and my heart dwell in regions that are little known to others, and if anyone asked me what was wrong I should be very much embarrassed to reply." No doubt. This time the enemy was not in himself, but in the office of the director-general. There was being concocted what is always concocted against men of the first quality: hatred. It was only looking for a pretext to burst out, and Liszt provided this by producing the *Barber of Bagdad*, by his friend Cornelius.

He considered that this opera had a great deal of spirit and originality, style and nobility, and he had it put in rehearsal with delight. Herr von Dingelstedt, who thought it was bad, made the most of his opportunity, and on the evening of the performance, when the curtain fell, Liszt was greeted for the first time in Weimar with a volley of hisses. No one was deceived: it was a carefully prepared cabal. It lasted quite a while, in spite of the feigned or real indignation of the Grand Duke, until finally Liszt, walking back again to the conductor's desk, turned with the whole orchestra to face the audience and applauded the author.

This same evening—it was December 18, 1858—he decided to hand in his resignation. It fell on the town

like a thunder-clap. Two days later, he directed once more the *First Symphony* of Beethoven (in C-Major), and this in so stirring a manner that the public could not contain its enthusiasm. In these moments, remarked Andersen, Liszt became as beautiful as inspiration itself; and Cornelius notes that during the performance he seemed so filled with his demon that people hardly dared to look at him. The Grand Duke united his efforts with those of such of the public as had remained faithful to him and tried to make Liszt retract his decision.

"Is there anything," he asked, "that could persuade you to stay?"

"Yes," he replied, "the authorization to produce *Tristan*."

Of this there could be no question, Wagner being precisely the electric pole from which all these storms proceeded. And, in fact, the Herr Kapellmeister never officially resumed his baton at Weimar. He addressed to the Grand Duke a letter of justification in which he explained the reasons that obliged him to renounce for good a post which he believed he had filled with honour unless a very different conception of his position assured him a more genuine independence. He did not conceal the fact that his own personal work demanded on his part an effort that he could scarcely find the energy for in the conditions of petty conflict to which he saw himself reduced. "What remains to me to write will, I hope, have echoes more prolonged than I should be able to hope for in my personal co-operation in the bustle of the theatre and concerts. In continuing my present duties, sire, I should be giving you what no amount of money would be able to make up for, my time, which is my renown. Gratitude can command

me to make all sacrifices, provided they are not sterile."

The Grand Duke, in spite of his respect for Liszt, did not yield him the victory. And the musician realized that once more the hour had come when, in order not to renounce himself, he must bid farewell to the personage he had been. Officially, during the whole of another year, nothing seemed to have changed. But in vain they made him an honorary citizen of Weimar and arranged a torchlight procession on his birthday: his soul detached itself from the places where it had suffered. He had ceased to believe and he was tired of waiting. He had resolved on a separation.

It was a matter of intellectual decency still more than one of sentiment. To remain would have meant spiritual abdication, and this was something to which Liszt could not consent. Before him, the theatre of Weimar had had no significance except under Goethe, and Goethe had never needed to appear there in public. Liszt asked for nothing more than the spiritual direction, but this seemed to him fundamental. Karl Alexander was unwilling to give it to him.

One evening, when he was unusually weary, Liszt jotted down on paper, for Agnes, this confidence:

"If I have remained at Weimar for a dozen years, I have been sustained by a sentiment that is not lacking in nobility—to safeguard the honour, the dignity, the great character of a woman against infamous persecutions—and more, a grand idea: that of giving new life to music by a more intimate alliance with poetry. The idea of such a development that would be freer and, so to speak, more adequate to the spirit of the times has always kept me on the alert. This idea, in spite of

the opposition it has encountered and the obstacles to which it has given rise on all sides, has, it is true, made some progress. Whatever people may do, it will triumph invincibly, for it is an integral part of the sum of just and true ideas of our epoch, and it is a consolation to me to have served it loyally, conscientiously and disinterestedly. If, when I settled here in 1848, I had wished to attach myself to the *posthumous* party in music, associate myself with its hypocrisy, flatter its prejudices, etc. . . . nothing could have been easier, thanks to my previous connections with the principal bigwigs on that side. I would certainly have profited externally in consideration and advantages; the very journals that have taken it upon themselves to heap abuse and insults upon me would have vied with one another in praising and extolling me, without my taking any great pains to make them do so. They would gladly have acquitted me of the few peccadilloes of my youth and celebrated and cried up in every way the *zealot* of the good and healthy traditions, from Palestrina to Mendelssohn. But such was not to be my lot; my conviction was too sincere, my faith in the present and future of art at once too ardent and too positive for me to be able to accommodate myself to the vain formulas of objurgation of our pseudo-classicists who are moving heaven and earth, crying that art is lost, art is lost.

"The waves of the spirit are not like those of the sea. Not to them has it been said, 'So far and no farther.' On the contrary, the spirit bloweth whither it listeth and the art of this epoch has its word to say just as much as that of the preceding epochs, and this it will infallibly utter.

"Nevertheless, I have never concealed from myself

that my position was most difficult and my task very ungrateful, for long years at least. Wagner having so valiantly innovated and achieved such admirable masterpieces, my first care was to win for these masterpieces an established place rooted in the German soil, when he was exiled from his fatherland and all the big and little theatres of Germany were afraid of taking the risk of his name on a placard. Four or five years of obstinacy, if you will, on my part, have sufficed to accomplish this, despite the slenderness of the means that have been at my disposal here. . . . The result is that Vienna, Berlin, Munich, etc., for the last five years have done nothing but follow what little Weimar (which they ridiculed at first) dictated to them ten years ago. They would like to call a halt now, make some sort of impossible digression that would be like the piece of new cloth in the old garment or the new wine in the old bottle. . . . But the fact is that something very different must be done, and I intend to justify the inscription which Wagner wrote for me under his portrait: '*Du weisst wie das werden wird.*' And there shall be no relaxation on my part as long as I live."

XXI

Storms at Zurich, Tears at Weimar, and the Vigil of St. Liszt at Rome

NEVERTHELESS, the cup was not yet completely full. The last drops of bitterness were lacking. But when unhappiness begins to flow, it does not stop at the middle of the glass, and the best reckoned measure is always that of sorrow.

The year 1859 opened with the first storm that had ever occurred between Wagner and Liszt. From Venice, where Wagner had taken refuge to compose *Tristan*, he tried to persuade Liszt to give *Rienzi* at Weimar, for he was in need of money. Franz spoke of this to the director, in spite of their disagreement, met with a refusal and did not insist. There followed a correspondence with Richard, bitter-sweet on one side and pathetic on the other, because, for Liszt, not to "serve" his friend was almost to betray him. But for Richard it was a question of keeping alive, of eating in order to be able to work. He had pawned everything he possessed when Franz informed him that just then he could do nothing for him. This drew from Wagner one of those arrows that he knew so well how to shoot at the "good fortune" of Liszt and his indifference, at the very moment when the latter, overflowing with admiration for the first act of *Tristan*, was sending him in reply his *Dante* and his *Mass*. The blow hurt him so keenly that Liszt in his turn responded with the sort of words that cannot be forgotten. "As the *Symphony* and the *Mass* cannot take the place of good bank securities, it seems useless for me to send

them to you. Not less superfluous henceforth will be your own pressing dispatches and wounding letters."

Poor dear great men who, for want of an available thousand francs, spoil so rare an affection! For if the storm, after bursting, had left the sky serene again, nevertheless something was changed in the limpidity of their souls. A disturbance of confidence, however passing, deprives the power of love of that blind security whose very sightlessness is its most beautiful condition. Wagner attributed to wounded pride what was nothing but frustrated love. Liszt suffered in silence until one day Richard wrote to him: "Your pain has made me see the ugliness of what I did." They mutually forgave each other, but they were never able to forget completely. And the one who forgot the least was Liszt. His transparent, highly impressionable nature came out blighted from this experience. The ingratitude of Weimar and the violence of his friend had taken from his wings their impalpable lustre. "You are too great, too noble, too beautiful for our Germany, with its provincial ideas," Wagner declared to him; "you have, among other men, the appearance of a god whose radiance they are not habituated and disposed to sustain. This is quite natural. You are nevertheless the first revelation of this species, for never before you has Germany witnessed the appearance of such a focus of light and warmth. How far has the dull and sorry attitude of those who surround you wounded your heart, filled you with anger and bitterness? That is what I should like to know, I who have become so insensitive to wounds of this sort that I often have trouble discovering where I have been hurt."

But Wagner himself confessed to Bülow that from

this time on he did not know where to find the proper style in which to address Liszt. There was between them that wall of glass through which everything remains visible, but which prevents one human being from touching another. When, in two hearts, phrases have taken the place of words, a more essential bond is on the point of slackening: the affectionate meaning of silence.

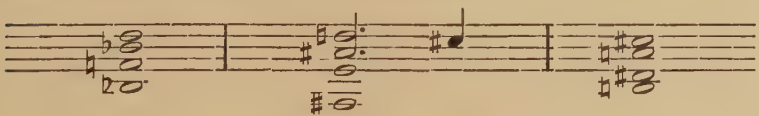
Moreover, Carolyne no longer encouraged a devotion of which she had become more and more jealous. Wagner had little love for her, she knew, he who could not endure bluestockings and pedants. She, on her side, dreaded his dangerous glory on Franz's account. It was almost a duty, from her point of view, to remove Liszt from the excessive influence of the man against all of whose ideas she had begun to fight. So she placed him on guard against everything that came from Venice, then from Paris, where, at the entreaty of Liszt, Wagner established himself again. She even went so far as to insinuate that he was trying to separate them. But Franz would not admit any such absurdity, and when the Princess made a journey to Paris he urged her to go and see Wagner: "Treat him kindly, for he is ill and incurable. For that reason one must simply love him and try to serve him so far as that is possible." But she did not go, and between the two friends the breach grew wider. "The shadows in his nature," Wagner confided to Mathilde Wesendonck, speaking of Liszt, "are not in his character, but only in his instinct. . . . The poor man now makes his whole sacrifice in silence. He submits to everything and believes that he has no power to do otherwise. You may imagine how touching is the greeting we exchange now and then clandestinely, like two lovers separated by the world."

On October 15, the life of Liszt was made emptier by a new departure: his Magnolette, the "good angel of the Altenburg," married Prince Constantin Hohenlohe, and left to settle in Vienna. She had found it difficult to make up her mind to this marriage, which put an end to her beautiful life with her mother and Liszt, whom she loved deeply. It was he himself who, with a torn heart, made her decide upon it, considering it his duty to insist upon her resuming in the world the place of which his liaison with her mother had deprived her. So the great house, so full of movement during these dozen years, was slowly becoming depopulated. But if the wedding festivities sustained Carolyne's hopes and quickened her steps, Franz, on the other hand, was saddened. He seemed to have lost a little of that admirable confidence which had always supported him, not confidence in himself, but in his happiness. He passed his forty-eighth birthday all alone at the Altenburg, and it was perhaps the first time when, on this great day, usually so brilliantly celebrated, the emptiness of his heart corresponded with the emptiness of the rooms. But Carolyne wrote to him, and Wagner too, and Magne; Cosima had even kept for him the surprise of a visit. But once more he was filled with that weariness of the soul which no longer feels itself *called*.

Of all the letters he received, that from Wagner was certainly the most beautiful. Why then did it no longer give him the same joy as of old? "In casting a serious glance over our relations past and present," said Richard, "I am struck with the solemnity of this day, which certainly should be regarded as one of the happiest that nature can count. In fact, this day has given the world an inestimable treasure. Without the precious gift it

has made to humanity in calling you into existence, there would have been an immense gap in the work of creation. The extent of such a gap could be calculated only by one who loves you as I love you and who could imagine you suddenly erased from the ranks of the living. I have considered this frightful gap, as much as the imagination is able to conceive it; then, as if I were emerging from a terrible dream, I have carried my glance back to you and have felt happy, profoundly happy, to verify your real existence and salute your appearance as that of one who has been newly born. Such are the feelings inspired by your anniversary, which has such a high significance for me."

In this appeal, however, Franz did not hear the sounds he had once heard. In vain he read and re-read the letter: it had not the old ring of sincerity. Then he sat down at the piano and played a few notes:



"This harmony," Liszt had said seven years before, "brings us closer together than all the sentences in the world." After repeating it many times in the echoing *salon*, Franz, for the first time in a long while, wept.

Other tears were to follow.

Daniel, who was studying law at Vienna, had come to spend his Christmas holidays with his sister Cosima in Berlin. He had been seriously ill with consumption for a long time, and his condition suddenly grew worse and soon became so alarming that Liszt was summoned in great haste.

Already this youth of twenty was nothing but a shadow

among the living, and four days after his father's arrival he had almost ceased to breathe. He was unconscious most of the time, occasionally uttering a few words. "I am going to get your places ready for you," he said. Hans von Bülow, Cosima and Liszt took turns at the bedside, and the father passed many hours there on his knees. During the fourth night it was he who discovered that his son's heart had ceased to beat. Then a great sob rose from him, the tears streamed down his face, and his whole being strained up in a passionate prayer to God: "Let us die to ourselves in order to live henceforth in the Lord. Let us cast off our mad passions, our vain attachments, all the dust of our futilities, and long only for heaven."

Cosima herself laid out the body, dressed it and placed a portrait of Pascal at the feet. They had constantly spoken of Pascal together those last days. And the picture remained in the coffin. The funeral was carried out with great simplicity. Four persons made up the procession: the chaplain, Liszt, his daughter, and his son-in-law. It was under a splendid Christmastide sun, and, while the acolytes in their white surplices swung the censer, a flock of doves wheeled at a great height over the grave.

Liszt took note of all these things in order to tell them to Carolyne. And when he returned to Weimar, it seemed to him that the man he had been was more and more losing himself in space.

Another unforeseen event suddenly astounded the Altenburg. One fine day in March, 1860, they learned that the Princess's divorce had been pronounced and that every obstacle to their marriage had now been removed. Carolyne's joy did not last long, for the

Bishop of Fulda, whom they consulted at once, refused to recognize the validity of the decree. Only one means of asserting her rights remained to the Princess, the intervention of Rome. She decided to start at once, thinking it would be a matter of a few weeks. And on May 17 she set out from Weimar, leaving her beloved Franz in the old house where they had passed twelve years of intimacy. The soul of the Princess was full of fortitude, but Liszt could not recover his peace of mind. His composition, *The Dead*, is of this date. Without any joy, he again took up his *Saint Elizabeth*, and his evenings dragged by without any desire to show himself at the court or to join his friends at the café. The weeks were followed by months, for, in spite of the support of the Grand Duke, the Princess was encountering at Rome the same difficulties as in Russia.

And Franz, who was now approaching his fiftieth year, passed through a crisis of neurasthenia. Everything bored him. He took pleasure in nothing but a project for establishing the canon of church singing on the sole basis of the Gregorian chant. "In certain less frequented regions of art, there is a kind of Jacob's struggle between the thought and the style, the sentiment and the pen. . . . Work is imposed upon us at once as a condemnation and a deliverance." And then, once more to Agnes, what lay at the bottom of his mind: "I am mortally downhearted, and can neither say anything nor hear anything. Prayer alone helps me at moments, but, alas, imperatively as I need it, I cannot pray any more with much continuity. May God give me the grace to pass through this mortal crisis, and may the light of His pity shine through my shadows."

About this time he took a fresh ream of paper and wrote:

"This is my testament.

"I write it on the date of September 14 (1860), when the Church celebrates the elevation of the Holy Cross. The name of this feast also expresses the ardent and mysterious emotion which, like sacred stigmata, has transpierced my entire life.

"Yes, *Christ crucified, the 'foolishness' and the elevation of the Cross*, this was my true vocation. I have felt it to the depths of my heart from the age of seventeen, when with tears and supplications I begged to be permitted to enter the seminary in Paris, and I hoped that it would be given to me to live the life of the saints and perhaps die the death of the martyrs. It has not been so, alas! But never since, through the many sins and errors that I have committed and for which I am sincerely repentant and contrite, has the divine light of the Cross been wholly withdrawn from me. Sometimes it has even flooded my whole soul with its glory. I thank God for it, and I shall die with my soul attached to the Cross, our redemption, our supreme beatitude; and to render a testimony to my faith, I desire to receive the sacraments of the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church before my death, and thus obtain the remission and absolution of my sins. Amen.

"Whatever good I have done and thought for twelve years, I owe to Her whom I have so ardently desired to call by the sweet name of wife—which human malignity and the most deplorable machinations have obstinately opposed hitherto—to Jeanne Elizabeth Carolyne, Princess Wittgenstein, born Iwanowska.

"I cannot write her name without an ineffable thrill. All my joys have come from her, and my sufferings will always go to her to find their appeasement. She has

not only associated and identified herself completely and without respite with my existence, my work, my cares, my career—aiding me with her advice, sustaining me with her encouragement, reviving me by her enthusiasm with an unimaginable prodigality of pains, previsions, wise and gentle words, ingenious and persistent efforts; more than this, she has still more often renounced herself, sacrificed what was legitimately imperative in her own nature in order the better to carry my burden, which she has made her wealth and her sole luxury.

"I should have liked to possess an immense genius in order to celebrate this sublime soul in sublime harmonies. Alas, only with difficulty can I succeed in stammering a few scattered notes which the wind carries away. If, nevertheless, something remains of my musical labours (at which I have toiled with a dominant passion for ten years), may it be the pages in which Carolyne, through the inspiration of her heart, has played the greatest part.

"I beg her to pardon me for the sad insufficiency of my works as an artist, as well as for the still more distressing insufficiency of the good intentions that have been mingled with so many failures and incongruities. She knows that the most poignant sorrow of my life is not to have felt myself sufficiently worthy of her, not to have been able to raise myself, to maintain myself firmly, in that pure and holy region which is the abode of her spirit and her virtue.

"At the same time that I owe to Carolyne the little good that is in me, I owe her also the small share of material goods that I possess—in a word, the little that I am and the very little that I have. She has assumed the burden of the conservation, the augmentation, and

the regular investing of the funds that constitute my heritage, amounting to about 220,000 francs. I beg Carolyne to see that this heritage which I leave is divided as simply as possible in equal parts between my two daughters, Blandine and Cosima.

"It will be, of course, understood that the small annuity which my very dear mother, Mme. Anna Liszt, in Paris, has drawn for a number of years from the interest of my property, is to be preserved for her intact.

"There is in contemporary art one name that is already glorious and will be more and more so: Richard Wagner. His genius has been a torch to me; I have followed it, and my friendship for Wagner has retained all the character of a noble passion. At one time (some ten years ago), I dreamed of a new epoch for Weimar comparable to that of Karl August, an epoch of which Wagner and I were to be the *coryphæi*, as Goethe and Schiller once were. The meanness, not to say the villainy, of certain local circumstances, all sorts of jealousies and absurdities elsewhere as well as here, have prevented the realization of this dream which would have redounded to the honour of the present Grand Duke. This notwithstanding, I retain the same feeling, preserve the same conviction, which it was all too easy to make evident to every one. And I beg Carolyne to assent to this by continuing after my death our affectionate relations with Wagner. Who better than she can understand the lofty impulse so resolutely communicated to art by Wagner, his divine sentiment of love and poetry?"

A few special legacies follow for the Princess and her daughter, Bülow, his favourite pupils and friends: Bronsart, Cornelius, Brendel, Pohl, Tausig, etc.

"Finally, I ask Carolyne further to send from me to

Mme. Caroline d'Artigaux, born Countess de Saint-Cricq (at Pau), one of my talismans mounted in a ring.

"And now I once more fall upon my knees with Carolyne to pray, as we have often done together.

"I desire to be buried simply, without any pomp, and, if possible, at night."

Having thus covered with his handwriting twelve large pages, Liszt shut them up in a drawer of Carolyne's bureau. It seemed to him that he had brought order into his thoughts and feelings. A time of solitude and voluntary exile appeared to him now necessary. The future depended on the council of cardinals charged with deciding on the affair of the Princess, and he trusted to her, knowing that she was tenacious.

She was so indeed. As she did not win her case quickly enough to suit her, in spite of the support of Cardinal Antonelli, Princess Carolyne appeared unexpectedly at an audience of Pope Pius IX. "Holy Father," she cried, falling at his feet, "I come to seek protection from the representative of divine justice." She described all she had suffered in terms so pathetic that the Pope promised to see that justice was done her, saying later on several occasions: "That woman overwhelmed me." A few days afterwards all Rome learned with surprise that His Holiness had approved the decree of the Roman Consistory. Believing that her cause was finally won, the Princess wished to return at once to Weimar; but a prelate who was one of her friends advised her not to hurry away.

"Your Excellency, stay a little longer. Wait."

"But have I not the signature of the Holy Father?"

"Wait."

She did not leave, and she did well, for the Cardinal

of Lucca decided that the documents were insufficient. It all had to be taken up from the beginning again. And for more than a year Liszt waited, worked, grew weary and wrote to Carolyne. He baptized his first granddaughter, to whom Cosima had given birth in Berlin, Daniela-Senta. Her name suggested that of the child who had disappeared and that of the grandmother: Senta is the name of a Wagnerian heroine. He grew more and more weary, examining himself in the light of his solitude. "My whole life," he said, "is nothing but a long Odyssey of the sentiment of love. I was fit for nothing but love, and hitherto, alas, I have only been able to love badly. But, thanks be to God, I have never loved evil, and every time I have felt that I was doing evil my heart has been profoundly contrite and humbled." At last, as the result of repeating to himself, "What have I to do in this world, unless it is to cease living according to the world?" he decided to set out for Paris.

It was spring. Twenty-six years had passed since he left the France of Louis-Philippe. He found that of Napoleon III. After he had embraced his mother, his daughter Blandine and his son-in-law Ollivier, the first friend he went to see was Berlioz. A poor, dejected, bitter Berlioz, who could only speak in a whisper, as if he were already leaning over his grave. Liszt dined with him, in the company of Ortigue (his Saint-Simonian comrade) and the new Mme. Berlioz. A mournful and desolate meal. Why had the artist so obstinately insisted on isolating himself in this way? The fact was that he no longer had any friends or partisans, "neither the great sun of the public nor the sweet shade of intimacy." The *Journal des Débats* alone still supported the misunderstood composer, out of regard for the brilliant feuille-

tonist. Berlioz still employed, notwithstanding, his vainglorious vocabulary. "The whole Press is for me; I have numberless friends to support me; I had the honour of dining with His Majesty the Emperor . . . and all this is of no use to me."

It was true. But was it prudence or envy that drove him to keep silence about the famous production of *Tannhäuser* which had just taken place? Liszt, a stranger to low sentiments, looked at him with astonishment. And Berlioz, in a few days, took up his pen with a harsh passion, recalling all the while the frank and candid eyes of Franz.

There followed a call on Rossini, who gave him a paternal greeting and chirruped with his flute-like voice a thousand flattering compliments:

"Are those beautiful locks your own?" asked the Italian, passing his hand through Liszt's mane.

"I believe them to be my property."

"You are very fortunate, my young friend. You see there are none left on my head, and I have scarcely any teeth any longer, or any legs."

"And the music?"

"Just imagine, my amusement is to write sonatas for the piano to which I attach pretty alimentary titles, such as fresh butter, chick-peas, green peas, cherries, or apricots."

Liszt was soon invited to the house of the Princess Metternich, to the Walewskis, the Rothschilds, and even to the Tuileries. Wherever he went he created all the stir of the old days, at the time of his concerts as a child, when his lithographed portrait was sold everywhere, adorned with the motto:

"This surprising combination of genius and infancy has outstripped the future, and, at the age of hope, has already caused a memory to be born."

In those days, the Duc de Chartres had given him a Merry-Andrew doll. This time Louis Bonaparte made him a Commander of the Legion of Honour. And the all-powerful Princess Metternich once more made him so thoroughly the fashion that the noise of it reached even to the retreat in the Hôtel Montaigne where Marie d'Agoult meditated and worked.

Franz was invited there one evening and he went, not without some apprehension. It was sixteen years since they had seen each other. Had she changed? Arabella, with her fine face, her sharply cut profile, that grand air of an offended queen—no, time had only dulled with a little additional gravity a beauty that had always been serious. She still had the same clear eye, which ferreted out every thought and so strangely mistook every sentiment. The head, in fact, carried on with the soul relations that were only very vaguely akin. Her sins were always sins of the intelligence and her senses were without authority. Franz was prepared to speak of their daughters, but she allowed him no time for this; without any preamble she launched into political questions.

"Well, what do you think of the question of nationalities?"

Liszt was disconcerted. She went on:

"Hungary, Poland . . . Cavour."

She had certainly changed very little. Franz bethought himself of an article by Lamartine on Italy. She declared it was stupid.

"And yet it has made a sensation in the government, where the unity of Italy is regarded as a phantom by well-informed people."

"No one who has spent even eight days there could

share M. de Lamartine's opinion," she said in a prophetic tone.

And she unfolded her mind on the new Rome of Gioberti, on Franchi and free thought, on the Piedmontese spirit and the Revolution. As Liszt preserved silence, she suddenly interrupted herself, and said, with her pretty smile:

"Will you do me the kind favour of coming to dinner some evening?"

"Very gladly, but it will be difficult for me to find a free day."

"Then perhaps you would lunch with me?"

"Thank you, I should be happy to."

"Whom would you like me to invite?"

"Anyone who seems good to you—anyone to whom I would seem good enough to deserve the honour of being at your house."

"But tell me . . ."

"Ronchaud, for instance."

"He is always a bore."

"Anyone you choose, then—or why not the two of us alone, or *tutti quanti*? But I warn you that I have lost my old sober habits. I eat a great deal, my appetite having come from dining with so many people."

It was arranged for a Friday. The Countess collected at her table Teissier, editor of *L'Illustration*, Mr. Browne of the *Morning Post*, and M. Horne of the *Débats*. Mme. d'Agoult declared that there was no longer any good taste in France, or any good breeding; that all interest in things of the intelligence had disappeared; that there was a great deal of building, but, for all that, no architecture; finally, that since the revolution of '48, of which, however, she had been a fervent apostle, everything had been levelled down. Franz retorted that in his opinion

the French were always marvellously intelligent and that the seven ancient wonders of the world, taken together, did not equal the reconstruction of Paris undertaken by the Emperor Napoleon. Whereupon, immediately after the coffee, he was the first to withdraw. But eight days later he returned without having himself announced and found Marie alone. They spoke first of Mme. Sand, whose last two novels had had a decided success.

"M. de Girardin," she said, "took it into his head to make me meet her again, but this attempt to patch things up miscarried."

"You had parted with too much unfriendliness."

"But you remained her firm friend, didn't you?" she asked in reply.

"Your falling out made a coldness in my relations with her, for, although in my heart I thought you were wrong, I none the less took your side."

"I believed the opposite."

"Without any reason, just as of old."

They talked of Goethe, then of George Eliot, who had recently come to see Liszt at Weimar, and whom people regarded as the most brilliant rival of George Sand. A burning subject, on account of *Nélida*. She slipped again into history and politics, remarking that she was writing for the *Siècle* and a new journal founded by her friend Neftzer, the *Temps*.

Franz was surprised that the conversation preserved this official tone. How different it had been with Caroline de Saint-Cricq, whose soul had immediately opened like a carnation placed in water! He spoke of Wagner, of the modern musical movement, and Marie declared that she was struck by the voluntary isolation in which Liszt persistently dwelt. Then he explained the long

perseverance of his artistic life, the part given to the public and that which remained in reserve for the artist, the identity of his former efforts with his ideas of to-day, and finally the permanence of that "I" which she had always found so odious. And suddenly Marie understood the profound meaning of that life of which Franz himself had extinguished the facile brilliance. Her face was covered with tears. Blushing with modesty, Franz rose and kissed her forehead.

"Come, Marie," he said, "let me speak to you in the language of peasants. May God bless you. Do not wish me ill."

She could not reply, and they remained a moment standing, holding each other's hands. She spoke again of Rome, of Bellaggio, then of Blandine and Cosima. This was the only time their names were uttered.

"Why," she asked, "did you not make an artist of Cosima?"

He did not know whether he should have laughed. Then, before they separated, she said again:

"I shall always remain faithful to Italy, and to Hungary, too."

As he descended the stairs, the image of Daniel appeared to his father. His name had not passed their lips. He remembered one of those maxims that Marie loved to polish for her journal: "I have known those who, seeking happiness, have found joy, and everything has ended in tears."

Wagner, who had left for Vienna before Liszt's arrival, returned to Paris a few days before his departure. They saw each other several times, in the glare of the world. Pardoned by amnesty a little while before, Wagner was

now preparing to return to Germany. For Liszt this was a limitless joy. At a luncheon at Gounod's, Richard introduced to him Baudelaire, a new adept of his music. The latter had just written a courageous brochure on *Tannhäuser*, and he presented it to Liszt with his poems. They understood each other at once, for, like Tannhäuser himself, these two artists, saturated with enervating delights, aspired to sorrow. Franz carried Baudelaire about with him wherever there was some chance of bettering his fortunes, but the latter's spirit, Wagner observed, " seemed to creep along in the rut of despair."

At last, after a six weeks' stay in Paris, Liszt returned to the Altenburg which, in all its beauty, he prepared to put out of his life. The news from Rome was confused indeed. The plan for the marriage seemed to be still hanging fire, but the only deep desire which he had now was to flee for many years from these exhausted spots. He arranged all his papers, packed up everything he owned that was of value, organized this new change of residence for his soul to some unknown country of love. No more Weimar, no more Grand Dukes; but was he going to establish himself in France, or at Berlin, near Cosima? With Blandine, at Saint-Tropez? At Rome? There would be time to decide after the Composers' Festival, which opened at Weimar at the beginning of August.

For this solemn occasion, Liszt kept open house for a few days longer. One after another his friends arrived: Bülow, Bronsart, Tausig, Cornelius, Brendel and his wife, the Olliviers and Dräseke, and Miss Anderson, the old governess of the Princess Marie, made them as comfortable as she could. They all met again at breakfast, after which they scattered, each running off to his own

rehearsal. In the green-room of the theatre they studied the *Faust-Symphony*, which Bülow was going to conduct. Liszt was there, giving advice to all the assembled composers. Suddenly a rumour spread, the great door opened, the musicians all jumped to their feet, and, in the midst of the general emotion, Wagner appeared. He walked straight up to Franz, and the two friends, without being able to say a word, gave each other a long embrace. Thus at last they found each other again in this Weimar dedicated for a dozen years to the glory of Wagner, at the moment when Liszt was on the point of quitting it for a long time. It was the fatal destiny of this friendship to be incessantly cut by long separations, to be broken and tied together again, to be stormy and yet necessary. On the day when Liszt had come to settle at Weimar, he had been welcomed there by a letter in which a man whose power he felt had offered himself as a serf. Now that he was leaving after these fruitful years of struggle and defeat, this same man, ten times, twenty times thrown to the ground, was still the serf of the same great thought and poor in money to the point of destitution. But from their double will was formed nevertheless one of the most famous exaltations of the century. Baudelaire called it "one of those solemn crises of art, one of those conflicts into which critics, artists and public are accustomed to throw confusedly all their passions." It was truly a date, this month of August, 1861, when the *Faust-Symphony* was played for Wagner, who had brought in his valise the complete score of *Tristan und Isolde*.

For Franz it was also a date of the heart. For now the news came, secret but sure: the Pope had granted the Princess's request. She could marry Liszt to-morrow.

When the festival was over, and while he was awaiting the necessary documents for the marriage, he made a short visit to his daughter before rejoining Carolyne. Alone, with his trunks duly inventoried and sealed, Franz shut himself up for a last time in the old house of happiness. "It is impossible for me to collect in a single focus the emotions of my last hours at the Altenburg," he wrote to Carolyne. "Each room, each piece of furniture, to the very steps of the staircase and the turf of the garden, everything is illumined with your love, without which I should feel reduced to nothingness. . . . I cannot contain my tears. But after a last station at your *prie-dieu*, where you always knelt with me before I set out on some journey, I experienced a sort of feeling of liberation that comforted me. . . . In leaving this house, I remember that I am going to you and I draw a loftier breath."

On October 14, he was at Marseilles. "These are the last lines that I shall write you. My long exile is near its end. In five days I shall find once more in you fatherland, home, and altar. May the mercy and pity of God, which free the indigent from their dust and raise the poor from their ditch, be praised without end. May I be able to give you days of consolation and serenity as the evening of your life approaches."

He was due to arrive in Rome on October 20. Everything was arranged for the ceremony to take place two days later, on the 22nd, the day of Saint Liszt, on which the great man was to celebrate his fiftieth birthday. The church of San Carlo al Corso was all decorated with flowers. It was in the early morning, at six o'clock, that the Princess of Sayn-Wittgenstein, born Carolyne d'Iwanowska, was to marry Franz Liszt, composer of music.

XXII

The Hermit of Monte Mario

ON the evening of the 21st, they took communion together. Then they passed the early hours of the night in the Princess's apartment in the Piazza di Spagna. It was late, and Liszt was just on the point of going to bed when the bell announced a visitor. The maid brought in an unknown and very much troubled ecclesiastic who carried with him an urgent letter addressed to the Princess. This last-moment message promised no good. It was indeed a piece of bad news: at the demand of the Wittgenstein family, who stated that the Princess had in no sense been forced to marry and would therefore, by taking a new oath, perjure herself, the Pope, overcome by scruples, ordered a complete revision of the brief of annulment.

Fifteen years of efforts and hopes were thus entirely ruined. The amazon of Woronince had not one moment of illusion: God ordained this renunciation. Obedient and superstitious, she accepted at once the opportunity to enrich her love with this supreme sacrifice. During this year and a half in Rome, moreover, she had lived such a cloistered, such a theological life that the outer side of her attachment scarcely interested her any more. As with many passionate souls, the moment had come when her faith in life was growing faint. Hard as it might be, this blow was no longer able to cut her to the quick. On the contrary, it separated her from the world, threw her for ever into those mystical regions where she was beginning her ascent to God.

And since now, through her very religion, she found herself clear-sightedly disentangling the skein of her feelings, she was able to see clearly into those of Franz. Of course he still loved her. She remained the bread that was necessary for this great unceasingly hungry heart. But she no longer possessed the power to satisfy him. During the time of their separation he had become more indifferent to her. It seemed as if he had learned to do without the habit of happiness, which had been one of the forces of their love. Age had touched him too little for her to be able to count upon its help. In this grey-haired young man she divined a soul that was still as elastic as ever, ready for every sort of rebound. She knew therefore that the thought of a regular union had ceased to be a necessity for him. She said as much to him, and he agreed that it was so. So she would no longer hear of imposing this duty on him.

"I have a very clear feeling," she said, "that we are not on this earth to fill a place, but to serve an idea and accomplish a work. God knows what it has cost me never to see Woronince or Weimar again. But if I detached myself so easily from the happy Podolian house where I planted the flowers myself under my parents' eyes, it was because Weimar seemed to me an idea greater than Woronince. And if, later, I gave up the hermitage where I had adored you, it was because Rome is an idea grander still than Weimar."

Finding in her very sacrifice the means of saving her love, she conceived from this moment the thought of dedicating Liszt to God. Since he had begun to interest himself in church music, he must henceforth apply himself to this alone. His life and his work would acquire from this the beautiful gradation that would

elevate them by successive phases from the success of the virtuoso to the purest glory of the spirit. She knew him well enough to feel that this rhythm corresponded well with his most intimate need. Besides, did not this decision come in the nick of time and like a redemption merited after the past, so full of difficulties and bitterness, through which he had just come?

Thus were opened in the heart of Rome two new mystic cells: one dedicated to music and the other to religious literature—that in which Liszt immediately shut himself up to finish his *Legend of Saint Elizabeth* and that in which Princess Carolyne began to build the mountain of her writings. Two cells: something new for these beings who, for twelve years, had possessed everything in common. But Carolyne knew also that to keep her beloved there was no surer method than to give him his liberty. She lived alone in her apartment, surrounded by green plants, palms, flowers, with the shutters closed all day long, a few candles lighted to illumine her papers, she lay in the *chaise-longue* in which she worked and planned her renunciation. She said to herself: "One cannot have everything. It is not enough to do as Polycrates did, throw an insignificant ring as a sop to Fate. Fate throws it back with contempt. Fate demands her tribute from every destiny, and when the latter refuses to pay she imposes it, for she always has death, sickness, and all the ills at her command. It seems foolhardy to wish to have everything, and, rather than lose it, I have renounced. Not without sorrow, a double sorrow! But it is the very sorrow that makes the ransom. After such a complicated drama, the *dénouement* cannot take place simply. Victory and sorrow alternate, but the good God softens the sorrow when

one is not puffed up with the victory. There is our beautiful Catholic secret, to be understood only with the heart: we do not seek to close the wounds of life, to cure our sorrows. But we ask God to let us live in peace, in serenity, in activity, in contentment, and even in gaiety, *with* these wounds and these sorrows."

Visitors were admitted in the evening, at the hour when the master came. They passed first through a little room containing a table laden with innumerable busts of Liszt. In the drawing-room, fourteen gigantic church candles were fastened to the walls—one for each year of love—all gilded and bedizened. One saw nothing but books, on the tables, on the chairs, on the floor, and everywhere those palms, those flowers. A few engravings were placed about at haphazard, among the old tomes. The Princess lay stretched out in the centre in a haze of tobacco smoke, her head enveloped in a white cap adorned with ribbons of every colour of the rainbow. She had grown stout. Her ugliness had increased. But the same passion still sharpened her glances and her words. Politics was the centre of all their discussions, that of the Church especially. Liszt and the Princess did not often agree, for his knowledge was that of men and hers that of books. He always declared for submission, she for revolt, the new spirit. Several cardinals came to see her, several schismatic priests. Sometimes Liszt sat down at the piano. Towards eleven o'clock every one left, and the Princess took up her pencils again.

Franz lived at first at 113 Via Felice, modestly enough, and buried himself in his work. His Roman friends dropped in at the end of the day: the Duke of Sermoneta, the most learned commentator on Dante; Donna Laura

Minghetti, the wife of the Prime Minister; Cardinal Lucien Bonaparte; Mgr. Hohenlohe; Mgr. Lichnowsky, the brother of his friend Felix; his pupils Tarnowsky, Bache, Bourgaud, Sgambati, and others. And as his social duties soon multiplied, Liszt resolved to escape by choosing for himself a more trustworthy retreat.

Scarcely had he decided on this when a great unexpected blow fell and turned him still further towards the inner life: his daughter Blandine died at Saint-Tropez, after having given birth to a new Daniel. Liszt immediately closed his too animated chambers and accepted an offer of the keeper of the archives at the Vatican, who suggested that he should come and live with him in the little monastery of the Madonna del Rosario, on the Monte Mario. It was just outside the town in the Roman Campagna. In the course of the summer of 1863, Liszt moved out into this solitude where the bells were his sole companions. "I hear those of three different churches which rise like aerial sentinels. There is where happiness lies, in the things that make us dream." He rose with the day, heard mass in the little church dedicated to the nine choirs of angels, prayed, set to work at his *Saint Elizabeth*, and continued to write every day to Carolyne. But he loved her now "in the eternal life" and believed himself henceforth purified of all earthly affection. The public, even the musical world, no longer existed for him. He had no intercourse save with the angels, his ruled paper, and a few ecclesiastics who were attracted to this saintly hermit musician.

Pius IX came to call upon him at Monte Mario. Liszt played for him on the harmonium and ran his fingers over his little working piano. They talked of the

great reforms which the artist was planning for religious music. The holy pontiff would perhaps have liked to offer him the direction of his chapel, but the College of Cardinals would have opposed this because he was not a priest. The modern tendencies of his music frightened them also. The Pope was pleased with Liszt's society, received him in private audience, gave him a beautiful cameo bearing an image of the Virgin, and invited him to hear a low mass which he was going to say himself in honour of Saint Ignatius. Mgr. Hohenlohe, who was to receive the next cardinal's hat, invited him to come and see him at the Villa d'Este.

Thus for three years he had been living surrounded by prelates when the most urgent letters came begging his assistance at the music festival at Carlsruhe. He refused at first, then allowed himself to be persuaded by Bülow, and the home-sick pilgrim resumed the road to Germany, reading on the way the *Roman Sketches* of Mgr. Gerbet.

At Strasbourg, he was present at high mass and sang with all his might : *Domine Salvum fac Imperatorem nostrum Napoleonem.* At Belfort, he bought *Manon Lescaut* and sobbed as he re-read the end of the romance, from the attack of the constables at the gates of Paris to New Orleans : " How can one not feel oneself Des Grieux at that last moment," he cried, " when he broke his sword so as to dig a deep grave and place in it the idol of his heart, after carefully wrapping all her garments about her to prevent the sand from touching her ? "

Exalted by this adolescent reading, Liszt arrived at Carlsruhe—only to learn that Bülow, gravely ill, was not coming, nor his friend Pohl, nor Bronsart, nor Wagner. Cosima alone had come to meet her father.

He was a little indemnified for these disappointments by the enthusiastic welcome that was given to his works. But as soon as the festival was over, Liszt set out for Munich, where Bülow was confined to his bed. Hans was in a sad state, moral as well as physical. A nervous illness alternately paralysed his legs and his arms. And this at the moment when the young king Ludwig II had just appointed him conductor of his orchestra, when the music of the future had experienced its most unexpected triumph! But Wagner learned of Liszt's arrival, invited him for a visit, came to Munich to get him and carried him off on the spot to his villa on the Lake of Starnberg.

For a year now Wagner's existence had been transformed. On a certain evening in May, 1864, when, finding himself at his wits' end in Stuttgart, he was wondering once more if it was worth while continuing to live, the king's messenger had appeared before him. The latter had handed Wagner a ring, just as once the Grand Duchess Paulowna had handed hers to Liszt. And this had been the sign of his deliverance. "My friend," he wrote two days later to Mme. Wille, "I should be the most ungrateful of men if I did not at once inform you of my immense good fortune. You know that the young King of Bavaria sent for me. This very day I have been taken to him. He is so beautiful and so charming, he is so rich in heart and mind that I am afraid of seeing his life vanish in this world of iron like a divine, inconstant dream. He loves me with the ardour and depth of a first love; he knows everything I have written and understands me as well as I understand myself. He wishes me to remain with him for ever, to work, rest, have my works produced. He will give me everything that is necessary for this. I am to finish

the *Nibelungenring* and have it played all together as a tetralogy in whatever manner suits me. I am my own master. I have unlimited power. I am no longer a petty orchestra conductor, but just myself and the King's friend."

" Solomon was mistaken," wrote Franz, in his turn, to Carolyne. " There is something new under the sun. I have been fully convinced of this since last evening. . . . I have named Wagner *the Glorious*. The high fortune he has at last encountered will sweeten as much as possible a few harsh traits in his character. Things are extremely favourable for him in every way. Naturally, we have had a very long talk, five hours. At bottom there cannot be any change between us." And after this conversation, in which the two friends opened their hearts once more, Wagner sat down at the piano and played for the " only one," his *Meistersinger*.

" A masterpiece of humour, wit, and vivacious grace," cried Liszt. " It is as light and beautiful as Shakespeare."

In exchange, Franz produced his *Beatitudes*. All misunderstandings between them had disappeared. But the shadow seen for a moment on another face caused a few heavy silences : the face of Bülow, in which Franz had read a distress that made him sick at heart.

" The walls groan and sing. I weep and weep again, I can do nothing but weep, prostrated before you, my good angel. You are everywhere here, and it is through your love that God descends into my heart." Liszt had arrived at the Altenburg, and he wandered through the rooms where the absent friend was present in every object. Ah, how this Weimar resembled a dead woman whose beauty had suddenly faded away ! The Grand

Duke was absent. Dingelstedt had ended by embroiling every one. In the theatre they were giving *The Daughter of the Regiment*. Franz had only one desire: to flee. So he set out for Berlin, where, on Cosima's arm, he went and knelt at Daniel's grave. But the German atmosphere weighed upon him too heavily. He longed to escape, and soon after took his daughter to Paris. They were received at the Olliviers' house, where Liszt occupied Blandine's room. On the floor above, his robust old mother was living, still in perfect health. But he thought only of Rome. Ten days later he found again his table at Monte Mario, his work, "all the space necessary for his career and his ambition."

The *Legend of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary* was finished. Liszt thought that his own life resembled that of his angelic compatriot. Hungarian like her, he had truly loved, he said, only heaven and the climes of sanctity. Like Elizabeth, he had lived in Thuringia, very close to that Wartburg which she had made illustrious with her labours and her charity. Finally, like her, he aspired to die in the odour of sanctity. In a few images he summed up musically everything that was essential in a life of which love was the sole rhythm.

When he had completed his *Legend*, Liszt, in all simplicity of soul, wished to draw closer to the heart of the Church. For a long time he had thought of taking minor orders which, without binding him by vows, would still confer upon him a reflection of sacerdotal dignity. He opened his mind to Cardinal Hohenlohe, who strongly supported a project that put a definite end to any idea of marriage on the part of his kinswoman, the Princess Carolyne. No one but Liszt suspected how

far she had renounced this. From now on, Franz prepared himself with the ardour of a Levite for his consecration.

The ceremony was arranged for April 22. A few days before, Liszt made a retreat with the Lazarists whence, hour by hour, he wrote for his friend a bulletin of his soul. They imposed upon him no other austerity. Save for a little additional spiritual reading, it was almost the same as his life at Monte Mario. He rose at half-past six, meditated, took coffee in his room. Mass at half-past eight, spiritual reading, in solitude; a visit to the Holy Sacrament; dinner in the refectory at noon. They placed him at a table by himself. No one spoke, and this was very agreeable to him. He did not understand very well the reading which one of the Brothers conducted from a high rostrum, from the beginning to the end of the meal. They gave him his coffee in his own room, an attention for which he was grateful. Rest for an hour and a half. Spiritual reading, a visit to the Holy Sacrament, a walk in the garden till half-past three. Meditation alone. Supper at eight o'clock, silence and reading, as at dinner. The Father Superior paid him a visit. At ten o'clock all lights were extinguished. "I should be happy if our dear Father Ferraris would be in the Hohenlohe chapel on Tuesday morning to confess me before the ceremony. *Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.* Epistle of to-day. Low Sunday. Saint John."

On the 24th: "I thank you for your little notes. All my memories of you are of acts of grace. As for my letters, I should be very glad for you to keep them. Whatever I can say about myself I can say only to you."

On the 25th he rose before six o'clock. He said a few prayers, heard mass and continued the reading of the *Treatise on Holy Orders* by M. Olier, *curé* and founder of Saint Sulpice. He made his confession and received the tonsure. "The tonsure should be in the form of a crown," he wrote, "in order that on the head of the cleric and all the clergy may be imprinted the image of the crown of thorns of our Lord Jesus Christ. It signifies also the royal dignity of him who is admitted to the ranks of the clergy." The words of which the ceremony consists are drawn from Psalm xvi. Liszt uttered them from his heart as well as with his lips in unison with the Bishop, while the latter was bestowing upon him the signs of the tonsure: "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup." A few prayers and Psalm lxxxiv: "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!"

When everything was over, Franz took possession of his new apartments, adjoining those of Hohenlohe, Grand Almoner of the Holy Father, in the Vatican itself. His door was just opposite the Loggia of Raphael, two steps from Michael Angelo's Sistine Chapel. A little before the Ave Maria, the Abbé Liszt was received in audience by the Pope. Pius IX welcomed him with special kindness.

"The gospel for this day," said the Abbé, "teaches us that the harvest is great. I am only, alas, a very small and very weak labourer, but I feel happy that I belong to you now a little more, and I beg Your Holiness to command me."

The Pope said:

"You will now undertake a few theological studies."

"I am not entirely without knowledge of these

and I shall take them up again with great zeal and joy."

When his mother learned the news, she wept.

From this time on, we see the Abbé regularly reading his breviary. Rome loved to watch him passing in a barouche, seated between two link-boys. He began his studies and served mass for Prince Hohenlohe. Less than a month after he had taken the minor orders, he wrote to the Princess: "My day yesterday was spent in reading fifty pages of the *Catechism of Perseverance* in Italian." But the great Liszt had already begun to reappear under the cassock, for he added in the same breath, ". . . and in seeking a few touches on the piano for the Indian jugglery of *l'Africaine*."

XXIII

Farewell to Several Pasts

IT was plain that the cassock had made of Liszt only an intermittent Abbé. In Rome he always wore it. When he travelled, it often remained in his trunk. How, for example, could he have worn it before the five hundred Hungarian performers of the *Elizabeth*, during the rehearsals which he himself directed at Pest in the month of August, 1865? They knew he possessed it; there was no need to add to the smiles. For the rest, he made no mystery of his devotion. He stayed with the priest, heard mass every morning, and followed in his surplice the procession at Saint Stephen's. The *Elizabeth* was acclaimed, the *Dante Symphony* encored, and for the first time in a long while Liszt gave a public performance of his two *Legends*. In spite of his real humility, he still found a little enjoyment in popular triumphs. Thus one evening, at the house of his friend Baron Augusz, whose guest he was, he had the piano rolled in front of the open window and played one of his rhapsodies in the presence of eight thousand listeners, who gathered to give him an ovation.

In the spring of the following year, he accepted an invitation to conduct his *Gran Mass* at Paris. A very few weeks before his departure for France, his mother died suddenly. This simple, good person was tenderly wept by her great son whom she had always found a little intimidating. Franz and his daughter Cosima were thus the only ones left of the family now, and Liszt was disturbed by all sorts of evil presentiments. It was with-

out joy, without enthusiasm, that he conducted his *Mass* at Saint-Eustache, in spite of the extraordinary crowd. The collection and the money for the seats amounted, it was said, to 50,000 francs. But the execution was feeble, the choirs poorly trained, and the majority of the critics tore the work of the illustrious Abbé to pieces. What gave him the most pain was the indifference and worse of his friends. D'Ortigue, always a Gregorian and anti-modern, made a pun that spread everywhere: "Take this *Caliszt* away!" As for Berlioz, "This mass," he said, "is the negation of art." Such was the reply to the Berlioz Week organized by Liszt at Weimar. But was it not necessary to forgive much to a composer whom ill fortune pursued with such constancy? To justify himself and reply to Berlioz's criticism, Liszt invited him to his rooms with D'Ortigue and the violinist Léon Kreutzer. With his score in his hands he discussed every one of the accused bars. By his magical execution he had already two-thirds converted them when Berlioz suddenly rose and went out. . . . A pity, but it was honourable to undergo in company with Wagner the assaults of his ill-humour.

The opinion of the newspapers was divided. Too much glory surrounded Liszt for him not to have his partisans. "Success, yes—even a sensation," he wrote to Carolyne, "but a difficult situation. Saint Gregory will help us." The *Credo* was regarded as the weakest and most inharmonious part of the *Mass*. Mme. d'Agoult was of this opinion, and she made it known in *La Liberté*. Franz decided not to go to see her, although, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the cassock, he was more of a lion than ever. The Emperor, the Nuncio, the ambassadors, everybody, regarded it as an

honour to receive the Abbé. But the hour of the day which he preferred was that which he spent every morning, between seven and eight, at the church of Saint Thomas Aquinas. "The breviary is also the greatest of all music." His old friend Rossini told every one that Liszt composed masses in order to accustom himself to saying them; but Franz had suspected for many years that his celebrity was an obstacle to his reputation. "As long as people applaud me as a pianist they will criticize me as a composer." They would have to end by understanding that, so far as the virtuoso was concerned, he had been dead for a long time.

Marie was not discouraged. She wanted to see him. Ollivier urged his father-in-law so much that one day he decided to make this always embarrassing call. This time she proceeded to announce to him that she was getting ready to publish her confessions. What did he think of that? Oh! It was nothing very new, unless she was more of a woman of letters than he supposed her. This project at least clearly placed between them the question of the true and the false. These were ominous words, but it was a good thing to have them uttered if they wished to avoid a resumption of the old war between them.

"And this is to be a romance?"

"What isn't one?"

"Guermann in your *Nélida* was very stupidly conceived."

The conversation could scarcely be pursued in this tone, but Liszt wanted to put an end to what he called the doctrinal sentimentality of the Countess.

"Forgive me, Marie, for being a little sharp in my expressions. Unfortunately, there is no agreeable way of

saying some things. There would be something immoral in continuing any spiritual intercourse between us."

And they separated with an inner conviction that this time would be the last. Liszt was not saddened by it, any more than he was relieved. This final farewell to the past was a part of that renunciation of self in which, for several years, he had found more and more delight. It was to some extent that sentiment of self-effacement which exalts every artist when he finds himself most alone in the face of eternity; the moment when he sees his life most consummated, most detached from him. Only now did Liszt contemplate his life with just enough detachment to allow him to disregard what was inessential to it and to apply himself all the better to tracing its inner path.

To know God, to love God, love, only that, to attain love by means of the spirit, sentiment by means of the intelligence, to pour through his work the plenitude of his heart, such was the brightly illumined device of his soul. Not love through faith, like that of Saint Peter; not love through hope, like that of the good thief; not the love of David, through contrition, humility and a broken heart; but the love of the Magdalen, love in every way simple and in spite of everything. The soul of Liszt was like some feminine souls which, through the sorrows, the deformities and the worst experiences of life, emerge intact, in all the purity of their first flower. However demoniacal the years may be, they take nothing, as they pass, from these angelic beings. It is of them that Pascal cries: "Oh, how happy are they who, with entire freedom and an invincible propensity of their will, love perfectly and freely what they are obliged to love by necessity!"

Mgr. Hohenlohe was made a cardinal at this time and left the Vatican. Franz, almost immediately upon his return to Rome, moved also and established himself again at Monte Mario, where he set to work calmly at his *Christus*. Carolyne would have liked to make him work more actively, but Liszt was less and less interested in his celebrity. He was arriving quite naturally at the *santa indifferenza*, while at Munich Bülow was having his *Saint Elizabeth* presented, with brilliant success, by order of the King. His inspiration had not deserted him, however, for he wrote a *Coronation Mass* in three weeks (for the coronation of Francis Joseph in Hungary). It was barely finished when he was obliged to move again, and he fixed his choice on the monastery of Santa Francesca Romana. Situated between the Basilica of Constantine and the Arch of Titus, it had a unique view over the Forum, and Franz's window looked out on the Temple of Venus. As he was now nearer his friends, the life of the world once more drew him a little, and he in turn, once a week, received visitors and pupils. An agitated, unstable period, in the course of which nevertheless he finished his *Christus*: it had occupied him for two years. Then there were new journeys.

To Ofen, first (that is, Buda, the twin city of Pest), where the Emperor was crowned King of Hungary to the sound of Liszt's new *Mass*. To Weimar, next, whither Karl Alexander had invited him for the festival, he was giving in commemoration of the eight hundredth anniversary of the Wartburg. Liszt appeared there for the first time publicly in his cassock. His old friends were much disconcerted by this; but they soon saw that Liszt was in one of his most beautiful moods, his face peaceful and serene. He directed his *Elizabeth*, that

great lay hymn to sanctity, and carried off a gorgeous triumph of tears and enthusiasm. But he did not think of his renown and cultivated his emotions much more. It was a delicious anguish to find himself at the Altenburg again. "Thirteen years of joys and sorrows, of *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, crowded upon me, sang, wept, cried, groaned, shone in that spot." And he drank deep of his gratitude to Carolyne, dismissed every profane idea, and even avoided passing through the Karlplatz, where he might have been surprised by memories that he had decisively conquered.

The Grand-ducal family entertained him for a few days, and Karl Alexander insisted with pressing benevolence upon Liszt's re-establishing himself at Weimar, at least for a month or two each year. Liszt said neither yes nor no; he was troubled in spite of himself by the idea that the Eternal City might cost him a part of the work he had still to bring forth. Weimar, after all, had been nothing but a mirage, and from all sides they were inviting him to connect himself with the great musical centres of Austria and Germany. Were not his works and those of Wagner now the object of a general curiosity? Neither yes nor no.

He fled the temptation and went to Munich. Bülow was there now as director of the new Conservatory, and he conducted the great performances at the Opera. Forty-eight hours after his arrival, Liszt, concealed at the rear of a box, listened to *Tannhäuser*. Then *Lohengrin*. A packed house, general enthusiasm. The King was there, carrying a bouquet for his fiancée, the Duchess Sophie (later the Duchess d'Alençon). Wagner alone was absent, the victim of popular opinion and of the ultramontane party, which accused him of having, in eighteen months, perverted a twenty-year-old prince

and squandered the funds of the State. In spite of his celebrity, in spite of the King's love, he had been obliged to return to the solitudes of Switzerland, but this time no longer as a disinherited man. Vanquished but glorious, duly pensioned by his benefactor and applauded by all the youth of Europe, he occupied at Tribschen, on the Lake of Lucerne, a comfortable house where he worked without fear of need. But Liszt was not unaware that beside the public drama of this destiny another was unfolding, privately, secretly, which for several years now had been tearing at the three beings to whom alone, apart from Carolyne, he was attached: Wagner, Bülow, and Cosima.

The affair had started at Reichenhall, in Upper Bavaria, after the Weimar festival of 1861. Cosima was taking a cure there when her father, her sister, Ollivier and Wagner came to pay her a visit. During the four years that she had been married and living in Berlin Wagner had only seen her once, during her wedding journey, at his house, in his refuge at Zurich. He found her just as she had been in Paris, shy and seductive. This ardent and concentrated man of almost fifty, so unhappy in his own household, expanded in the company of this beautiful feminine Liszt whose soul he divined that he had attracted just as he had captured that of her father. The lively Franco-Hungarian blood of the young woman was electrified by the voice of this formidable inventor of passionate cries. What mattered the twenty-five years' difference in their ages? There is no age for some temperaments. The decisions of the civil State scarcely count for those who dare to say: "I carry revolution with me everywhere." Ten years before, Mathilde Wesendonck had written: "Wherever he is, he brings

life." In this shy and so precisely brought-up Cosima Wagner had met the one for whom he had always been waiting, whom he demanded of Liszt as the only music that was necessary for him and whom he had met once before in Mathilde Wesendonck: "Give me a woman's heart, spirit, soul, in which I can plunge entirely, which really understands me." And Franz, in his daughter, brought him this soul, this spirit, this heart, and her very flesh. I do not know if there exists another such example of lasting and powerful love. That of the Arnaulds, perhaps, in which a whole family betrothed themselves to Jesus Christ. So with the Liszts; two generations were united, then three, in order to assure to one man the survival of his blood and spirit, and, in addition, the service of his temple.

Reichenhall had been only an interrogation. Cosima and Wagner saw each other again the following year on the Rhine, then at Frankfort, where he sang for her, for the sake of the symbol, the farewell of Wotan. The ecstasy which he observed in Cosima's look seemed to him full of serenity. Between them "everything was silence and mystery." Shortly after the sudden death of Blandine, they met again in the Gewandhaus at Leipzig, where Bülow was playing a new concerto of Liszt's. Veiled in black, pale, Cosima seemed to have come from another planet. The whole outside world became mere shadow-play for these two beings, who were already living entirely in one another. Yet they said nothing. It was only on November 28 of the following year, in Berlin, through which Wagner was passing, that, seated side by side on the cushions of a landau, they made their avowals. They hardly needed to speak in order to understand the misfortune that had befallen them.

Between Bülow and Wagner there had existed for almost twenty years a spotless friendship, and in the younger that same mad passion of adoration and devotion as in Liszt. These two magnificent artists were, in the purity of their hearts and the innocence of their enthusiasm, surprisingly alike. Were they going to be betrayed by those very ones to whom they had given everything? One can understand how silence, complicated by all these arrows of the mind, must have seemed to Cosima and to Wagner more guilty and more decisive than any words whatever.

But the time for resistance passed. Frau von Bülow had become for the one she loved everything she had dreamed of being. First, his secretary. It was she who saw to his correspondence, even that with the King. It was she who took charge of the singers and the newspapers. Regardless of her good name as well as of her domestic peace, now that she shared Wagner's daily life, this self-willed woman adopted Liszt's device of "everything or nothing." And Bülow ignored everything, wished to ignore everything perhaps, unable to find any screen against the catastrophe which he tried not to see, immersing himself in harassing labour, with no respite except in illness. Daily Cosima made a painful effort to save appearances. But her nature was too strong to allow itself to be broken by the suffering of others. When Wagner set off again as an exile, she prepared without any dissimulation to join him.

Liszt knew this, and he knew that it was vain to struggle against a woman formed in his own image. But he loved Bülow and tried to mitigate his despair. He spent his days with Hans, suggested journeys, a concert tour in Italy, wrote with him the regulations of the

new Conservatory. At last he decided to set out for Lucerne in order to see Wagner and, if possible, obtain a renunciation from him.

On Wednesday, October 9, 1867, at three o'clock, he arrived at the villa of Tribschen, where Richard was awaiting him. The man was changed, wasted, furrowed. They shut themselves up in the composer's study and did not stir out of it for half a day. Presently, in the soft afternoon, above the autumn roses, blossomed the first notes of the third act of *Die Meistersinger*, which had just been written. Once more the heart of Liszt swelled with happiness. "No one but you," he cried, "no one but you. . . ." And he asked himself if he had come for any other purpose than to exalt his soul, cry out his joy, and pray God to forgive everything to those among men who created beauty.

What Liszt asked of Wagner during this visit has never been told. On his return to Munich he said: "I have seen Napoleon at St. Helena." The face of the solitary had stricken him with awe and prevented him from uttering his reproaches. There are men whom the laws do not reach. Not even the laws of the heart. The sadness of genius deprived of happiness has in it something inhuman. One does not prevail against these fierce, insensible monsters with gentle phrases. No doubt Wagner had listened to Liszt's first stammerings; then, when he sat down at the piano, their confidences were swallowed up by the music.

Bülow showed heroic fortitude. The newspapers tried to make him ridiculous. This frail, passionate man sank himself in work, dwelt with his sorrow. It did not seem to him to be great enough until, for the pleasure of the King, he had produced *Die Meistersinger*

and *Tristan*. He too had drunk the philtre. But after a fearful year he gave way, exhausted. Isolde had left. She had joined her lover. He did not embark in pursuit of them on the ship of King Mark.

Nor did Liszt. But he was resolved henceforth to impoverish his life still more, to strip it of its most beautiful affections. He broke with his daughter and with his old comrade. The honour of his soul required this as much as the honour of God.

Then the Abbé Liszt and the Abbé Solfanelli repaired to Assisi. There Solfanelli said the mass in the chapel in which Saint Francis died. They visited the tree whose thorns, stained with blood, were converted into roses (twelve red, twelve white) in the presence of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. From Assisi they went to Loretto, then Grotta Mare, on the shore of the Adriatic.

Here the chief occupation of these two ecclesiastics was the reading of the breviary. People saw them now marching along the beach, now in some grove of lemon-trees, seated side by side. Sometimes they installed themselves in an old boat buried in the sand where they recited together the Vespers and Compline.

XXIV

The Demon of Excessive Emotions

"WEIMAR has become a place of pilgrimage," Mme. de Moukhanov (the former Mme. Kalergis) wrote to her daughter. "All the German musicians go there to render homage at the feet of the great man." This great man was Liszt, re-established at Weimar for several months every year, as the Grand Duke had wished, as his old musical friends had hoped, as he himself had seen to be necessary. Rome was hardly favourable to the music of the future. Not even to music itself. And Liszt felt that for serving God and his soul the most beautiful Roman retreat, were it even the Villa d'Este, was not equal to ten feet cut from the musician's earth, the pupils to whom he could give his faith, and, here and there, a good orchestra to govern for the glory of God.

He was not totally deprived of these blessings at Rome, but they did not exist there in a way that was entirely after his own heart. All this public of old prelates, learned folk, persons who had retired from the world, peaceful and resigned beings who came to have their souls soothed by the indulgent sun of Saint Peter, no longer harmonized as it had once done with the vigour of his fifty-eight years. Now that his religious hunger had received its first appeasement, he felt the need of breathing a livelier air, reopening a window on his own century. The apartment in which the good Carolyne was writing the eight volumes of her *Petits entretiens à l'usage des femmes du grand monde*, her *Chapelle Sixtine*, her

Eglise attaquée, her *Simplicité des colombes*, seemed rather musty. Franz found himself more the oblate than the novice, more than the hermit especially, since he had the soothing certitude that whenever he wished he could find again his mystic refuges.

So he accepted the offer of Karl Alexander, and at the beginning of the year 1869 returned to Weimar for a long visit. The Altenburg was occupied. In exchange Liszt received from the Grand Duke a little house that suited him very well. This was the Hofgärtnerei, the dwelling of the head-gardener of the court, put in order and furnished for the musician. A dove-cot buried in the verdure of the park. A vestibule, a kitchen, and a room for his servant Pauline on the ground-floor. Upstairs, three apartments: a music-room, the bedroom, and a little dining-room. The rugs were there, and the Algerian hangings, the grand and the small piano, even many of his familiar objects, the engravings, the busts and the swords of honour. The princesses themselves had arranged everything. Above his bed Franz hung a sacred image and the old ikon of Saint Francis de Paul. On his table, beside the window, he set the little yellow daguerreotype in its gilded paper frame representing Carolyne at twenty-seven. He was very much at home in the midst of this "Wagnerian luxury." And at once a new life began, his second Weimarian incarnation.

Pupils flocked about him, twenty during the first season, men and women. As in the old days, he reserved the mornings for his personal work, rising at six and going to mass at eight. In the afternoon he gave his lessons, generally to several of his assembled pupils, sometimes all at once, making one or another play according to his impulse of the moment. The lessons in no

way resembled those of the days of Geneva and Paris. How afraid these ladies and gentlemen were when the clear eye of the great Liszt lighted on them and he invited them to show their little knowledge! After amusing himself with the blunders of one of them, after becoming purple with rage at the neat and eminently "Conservatory" playing of another, he himself interpreted the accused passages. They listened to him with something more than deference, this man who had known Schumann, Chopin, and Beethoven, playing with them, before them, and whom they had admired. Every Sunday, from half-past eleven to one, Liszt held an official reception. The Grand Duke was never absent on these mornings when a little group of artists and intimates made up the essential part of the public. Ladies appeared there in numbers and continued to seek the attentions of the master, as had been the rule for forty years. As a general thing, they played chamber music, new compositions, and Liszt came and went, criticized, commented, and ended by sitting down at the piano himself.

He gave all his lessons gratis. He became attached to many of his pupils, remained in correspondence with them, interested himself in their careers. This resulted in some jealousies, on the feminine side especially. Liszt said, "They all love themselves in me"; but he blessed them in secret for nourishing that perpetual sun of love without which his genius would have been instantly frozen. He had much more of a passion for being loved than for being admired, for it was love which they honoured through him, and love is the only approach to art and to God. When Carolyne established herself in Rome, Liszt had not understood at first that she was leaving this world of music for ever to shut herself up

in a purgatory of spiritual delights and contritions. He had tried to follow her there, endeavoured to think with her that art was not a religion apart, but the formal incarnation of the true, Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion. His wings had begun to grow. But to the reading of the breviary had soon been added the *Technical Exercises*, a few *Lieder*, the *Funeral Triumph of Tasso*, then a home-sickness for the music of Wagner. And when the "Good Ecclesiastes," as he nicknamed the Princess, had begun her immense work (which was to comprise twenty-four volumes) on the *Inner Causes of the External Weakness of the Church*, the Abbé, without thinking of it, found himself an artist again.

Artist and man. A man almost old, crowned with very beautiful white hair, with a body that was slightly bent, but the whole individual still supernatural. When they approached him, women always blushed under that glance of his, so full of heaven and caresses.

This same autumn, at Rome, a new pupil, the Countess Janina, fell madly in love with him. A sombre creature, of Cossack origin, she prowled day and night about the beloved master, played his music at concerts and copied his manuscripts with a true talent for calligraphy. Liszt prayed to his patron saint to come to his aid, for she was very ardent, this Olga Janina. He fled from Rome to Tivoli, where Cardinal Hohenlohe kept for him all the year round an apartment in the Villa d'Este. The Countess succeeded in breaking her way in and managed to appear one fine morning dressed as a man, her arms filled with flowers. Liszt was working at his *Cantata for the Centenary of Beethoven* and kept within reach of his hand the *Christian Perfection*, a very recent work of

Carolyne's. But this time the beautiful gardener of love got the better of all the talismans.

Three months later, Liszt liberated himself by returning to Weimar. His pupils hastily assembled and he resumed his life as the oracle and great master of music for all southern Germany. This year 1870 was going to be remembered because of a new music festival for which Liszt had been asked to draw up the programme. Between June 15 and July 6, the Weimar theatre was to present *Tannhäuser*, *Lohengrin*, *Der Fliegende Holländer*, *Die Meistersinger*, and even *Tristan und Isolde*. Liszt's *Cantata* was to figure also, along with the works of Raff, Beethoven, and others. The Emperor of Russia had arranged to come, as had also several Grand Dukes and the Prussian princes, Kaulbach, Turgenev, Pauline Viardot, Rubinstein. Everything gravitated about Liszt, who directed the musical as well as the literary part of these festivals. Every one came to him. His energy was unwearable, his amiability inexhaustible. On the whole, he ruled public opinion at Weimar much better now that he was only a passing guest. "All enmities die in the presence of the great Liszt, who has never appeared greater and better," Mme. de Moukhanov-Kalergis wrote to her daughter. "Into every detail he carries his infinite grace, his delicate attentiveness to each and every one, amiable to the humblest, distributing praise and advice, on his feet from seven o'clock in the morning, playing, directing, talking the whole day, and this on the eve of his sixtieth year. . . . He doubles the strength of all those who come near him and never loses his own." And, after the Wagner festival had begun, "One is intoxicated with music and the ideal," she wrote, still vibrant, and this "with the warmth of enthusiasm, a

unanimity of admiration that one encounters nowhere else." No one read the newspapers any longer. There was a general stupefaction when the war broke out. Then a general flight. They were mad, said the White Fairy, these people who, over wretched questions of national vanity, trampled under foot "the harvest of heaven and that of genius."

Liszt had just left for Munich, where were given—in the absence of the author—the first performances of *Die Walküre*. His perplexity was extreme. The son of the humble steward of Raiding was now an illustrious European, belonging to four countries, who, in half a century, had put down roots in Paris, in Weimar, in Budapest, and in Rome. He found himself with a son-in-law Prime Minister of the liberal empire which he admired so much, and a daughter who, for eight days, had been the wife of one of the new heroes of German nationalism! For he had just learned from the newspapers of the marriage of Cosima and Wagner, celebrated at Lucerne. Through the newspapers, since, for a year, Cosima had ceased to write to him. This little piece of news of the artistic world was mingled with accounts of German victories.

Taking refuge with his friend Augusz, in Hungary, he wrote to Carolyne: "If the empire falls, I shall feel personally a great sorrow." And on September 4: "After the terrifying blow of the surrender of the French army and the Emperor, we must renounce for a long time the hopes of which your letter spoke. Providence has pronounced its decree against the sovereign whom I admired as the best and ablest personage of our epoch." Following the prediction of Voltaire, the age of the Prussians seemed thus to have come. What was going

to happen now? "No doubt from this catastrophe also some great idea will emerge and we shall witness the appearance of some unimagined regulating principle for the modern States; but the philosophy of history is a science that is more than ever conjectural to-day and altogether enveloped in terror." Liszt was neither able nor willing to join any battalion but that of the musicians. "Politics is the science of opportunity, and art of expediency. Herr von Bismarck evidently knows better than the others what he intends to do, so far as the present is concerned! I cannot follow him into these high regions, and shall apply myself with all my heart to *Saint Stanislas*. Let us pray that the reign of God may arrive."

Saint Stanislas was a new oratorio on a legendary Polish text adapted by the Princess. Liszt worked on it with little pleasure. The Cossack Countess had confused his religious inspiration a little. Then everywhere in Hungary they were tormenting him to settle at Pest, where he was to be appointed director of a new and important academy of music. He allowed a promise to be wrung from him, and returned to Weimar in the spring of 1871, without having seen Rome or the Princess again. In her presence he would no doubt have abandoned the project of his fellow-countrymen at Pest, since in reality this directorship, more honorary than effective, seemed to him a handsome and pleasant sinecure. It coincided, in other respects, with that pigeon-hole phase which had just seized upon him again. Not until he had signed his contract did he return to Santa Francesca Romana.

Carolyne was still living in the Via del Babuino, immured, happy, busily writing. Franz plunged once

more into his beatitudes and his adoration for the great Poor Man of God, thanks to whose protection he hoped to fight and conquer his old enemy, not the little devil of mundane things, but "the demon of excitements and extreme emotions." But it was exactly this demon that was about to play him two tricks. And first, a vengeance. From New York there dropped down a cable message from the Countess Janina: "I am setting out this week to pay you for your letter." The letter was one in which Liszt, pursued by the correspondence of this jealous creature, had rather rudely dismissed her. When she arrived in Rome, Franz had left for Pest. She followed him there and ostentatiously trumpeted her plan to kill Liszt and then kill herself. She stormed her way into his bedroom and placed on the table her revolver and several vials of poison, ornaments that she had exhibited twice already the preceding winter. The artist calmly said to her:

"What you intend to do is evil. I urge you to give it up, but I shall not prevent you from doing it."

She indulged her hysterics while Liszt put the lady's trinkets in a place of safety. Baron Augusz and other friends dropped in opportunely, appeased this pretty fury and put her on the train for Paris. As she still had many manuscripts which the composer had entrusted to her talent for calligraphy, she burned them. Then she wrote a virulent book, the *Souvenirs of a Cossack*, which she followed up with the *Memoirs of a Pianist*. But Liszt had been immune for twenty years against this kind of poison.

Nevertheless, "the demon of extreme emotions" still held in reserve an even more harrowing experience: the Baroness Meyendorff, *née* Princess Gortschakoff, with the

Christian name of Olga, just like the Countess Janina. Liszt had known her for seven years, ever since he had settled in Rome, where Meyendorff had a post in the Russian legation. The Baroness was a woman of high intelligence, very slender, usually dressed in black. Glacial with those to whom she was indifferent, she left upon those whom she found sympathetic a very different impression. She was one of those women for whom sympathy, friendship, are impossible sentiments because they understand nothing but passion. With all this went an extremely developed culture and a firm and direct, even somewhat authoritative, character; and she was an original and exceptionally gifted pianist.

From the moment she saw Liszt she avoided him, aware of the danger into which such a man might draw her. And for years this silent woman never allowed anything to appear. But in 1867 her husband was appointed Russian minister at Weimar, where, fifteen months later, Liszt saw her again. No doubt she thought that here the struggle would very quickly become useless, and henceforth, with the characteristic wholeheartedness that threw her altogether against or toward her desires, she sought the man whom she had fled. Franz resisted her. He believed he was no longer young enough to bear the expense of this outlay. And then there were the cassock, Carolyne, work. . . . But the Black Cat, as she was called, possessed the power of cats, all the subtleties of the intelligence and an unbreakable will. She excited the composer's power of work; she renewed, in her youth, her beauty, the enthusiasms with which Carolyne had once supplied him. He inhaled in her presence the last temptation of the secret world of pleasures.

So Liszt yielded, not to an ultimate weakness, but to this supreme force. He stood erect again in all his stature as an artist. Once more he appeared most laborious, most inspired. Mme. de Moukhanov, watching him play his *Requiem* at the organ, regretted with the Grand Duke that there was no painter to capture to the life the splendour of his genius. She wrote: "He has found his supreme and complete expression in the music of the Church, in which he will never be surpassed, in which he exhausts—without ever exhausting himself—all the riches of form and metaphysics. He gives himself entirely in his works, as in his playing. What makes the magic of this unique playing, the fascination, the complicated enchantment of his nature, is precisely what wounds some of the listeners who hear his religious compositions. They find in them too much mystical piety, too much of a palpable abandon, too many genuflections, if I may so express myself—and they are shocked too by the theatrical pomp. Very few have the stuff in them to identify themselves with the drama of a soul that reveals itself to God, cries and weeps, wishes to take heaven by violence—the struggle of a Pascal. That is what I adore in the music of Liszt: it is human, of all times, it is each of us, and, above everything, style. Why has he accompanied his Three Magi with a triumphal march? It is out of respect for the grandeurs of the world, which he thinks should humiliate themselves with splendour. There is a chapter in Saint Thomas Aquinas 'On Magnificence' to justify him."

There, expressed with great intelligence, is an appreciation to compare with those of Schumann and Chopin, noted down thirty years earlier. Liszt was the same

man, but the faults had been consumed and the virtues (in the sense of courage) deepened. The soul had assumed all its weight, its utterance had become clear. Satanic doubt and divine certitude occupy the two poles from which this agitated intelligence draws its electricity. Luminous "ninths," phosphorescent "elevenths," a persistent polyphonic chromatism, such are the distinctive signs of his music, with certain passive suavities that spring from the liturgical quietude. This elderly man, still in the fullness of youth, invented the astonishing series of major harmonies founded on the successive notes of the harmony of the diminished seventh which was to become a determining factor in Wagnerian and modern harmony.

When Mme. de Meyendorff lost her husband in 1871, she came to live openly near Liszt at Weimar. Thenceforward this magnificent man thus had two cities and two friends. Even three cities, for one must add Pest, where, after 1872, he spent two or three months every year as director of the new Conservatory. This led to the first long dissension between himself and Carolyne. She felt that not the man alone but the artist also was escaping her. Her long, her careful influence, extended to so many details of the spirit after all those of everyday comfort, was evaporating through distance. She was no longer the *only one*. She knew it; it broke her heart; but she gave up the unequal struggle. She delegated her friends to watch over the beloved and even to spy on him. The outlets of the tomb in which she dwelt were closed. It was by letters alone that she preserved contact with the world and with Liszt. Poor letters to which he never replied either very quickly or very well. Even when he returned to Rome, letters too often took

the place of visits. But when he went to see her, the recluse scattered roses over her carpets. He perceived this only to smile, pick one up, nibble at it and tear it to pieces, then return to the Villa d'Este. "The woman who does not follow the ordinary path of happiness," she repeated to herself, "should devote herself to other activities. Every one seeks his way slowly, but finds it always. If she does not give herself to art, to an intellectual occupation, she must find something else." She had found her own in renunciation and theology. She could truly say: "I am more harmonious every year."

In the midst of this general ageing of things came deaths. D'Ortigue died in 1866, a little before the last visit of Liszt to Paris. Ingres, the year after. Rossini, in 1868; Berlioz, in 1869; Caroline d'Artigaux, in 1872, that Caroline, "ripened for heaven," whom Liszt had so piously adored. The kingdom of hearts was being quietly depopulated and the whole earth was assuming another face.

While these gaps were being hollowed out, Franz bent his ear towards Bayreuth, a little town in Bavaria. He had read many things in the newspapers. Bülow said that the temple of which Liszt had been the first to dream was really going to rise. But since silence had fallen between himself and the Wagners, this nostalgia, this music, this love, had ceased to be anything but sorrow.

The first stone of the theatre of Bayreuth was laid on May 22, 1872, on the birthday of the master. Franz was not present. He had waited till the last hour for an invitation that did not come. He delegated in his place an old friend, Fräulein von Schorn, and went with her to the station. It was on the morning of Pentecost.

Liszt had put on his cassock. He plucked a bough of an elder tree and handed it to the messenger as a branch of peace. When the train moved out, he remained for a long time following it with his eyes, making signs with his hand. Then he opened his breviary and walked away, his white head bowed before him.

Returning home, he at last found the letter for which he had so painfully hoped. But it was now too late.

"Cosima insists that you will not come, even if I invite you. So we must endure this too, we who have already endured so much! Yet I will not omit to invite you. And you know what it means if I say to you, Come. You entered my life as the greatest man to whom I have ever addressed words of friendship. You separated yourself from me, perhaps because you have less confidence in me than I have in you. In your place, the thing most intimately your own, yourself born a second time, has come to satisfy my ardent desire to have you entirely mine. So you live in full beauty before me and in me. We are united above the tombs. You were the first one who, by his love, ennobled me. I yield now to a second and higher existence through her to whom I am married, and I can accomplish what I could not have accomplished alone. Thus you have become everything for me, while, for you, I remain so unimportant. What immense advantages have you not given me over you! And if I say, Come, I mean by this, Come home, for it is yourself you will find here. May you be blessed and beloved, whatever your decision may be."

"Dear and glorious friend," Liszt replied, "I do not know how to reply by words to your letter, which has profoundly shaken me. But I ardently hope that the

shadows and the circumstances which have held me at a distance will disappear and that we may soon see each other. Then you will understand that my soul remains inseparable from yours, revivified in your second and higher existence in which you are accomplishing what you could not have accomplished alone. I recognize there the grace of Heaven. The blessing of God be with you both, together with all my love."

Almost another half-year rolled by before he set out for Bayreuth. He embraced Wagner, his daughter, the five children. The Festspielhaus was already rising from the earth. He also saw the foundations of the beautiful villa which the Glorious One was having built for himself. Liszt, who was almost poor now, rejoiced that fortune had at last been merciful to his friend. Wagner read him the first draft of *Parsifal*, which overwhelmed the Abbé. As for Cosima, "She surpasses herself," he said. "Let others judge and condemn her; for me she remains a soul worthy of the *gran perdono* of Saint Francis and admirably my daughter."

Admirably my daughter. . . . There is one of Liszt's aptest phrases.

XXV

Bayreuth, the Great Miracle of German Art

BUT the reconciliation with Bayreuth supremely displeased the Princess. In it she saw two signs: that Liszt had yielded to profane music and that her own reign was definitely over. Liszt knew this very well too, but he strove to preserve for his friend his most beautiful inner sonorities. "On two points, now major for me, our opinions differ: Weimar and Bayreuth. But I do not at all despair of a solution of these dissonances. . . . Unhappily, I am unable to write to you any more without reflection. I make it inwardly, like Saint Francis Xavier, who wrote to Saint Ignatius only on his knees." So they had reached the point where they could only converse like two saints! And not to run the risk of spoiling this, Franz spent a whole winter away from Rome. Explanations of the inexplicable or the too explicable could only lead to new misunderstandings or to those compromises that are very saddening to the life of the heart. Carolyne did not disarm. It was not with Weimar and Bayreuth alone that she reproached him now, but with his pupils, his feminine pupils especially, and even his need of orchestral music. Truly, absence had become a necessity.

Liszt therefore passed the entire winter at Budapest. For the benefit of the composer, Robert Franz, he gave a piano recital there, the first in twenty years. His excuse for this derogation from his principles was that it was a matter of charity. Then, in the spring, he applied himself to his oratorio, *The Christ*, which was

presented at Weimar. It was an event at the little court, and people flocked in from all the surrounding towns. The *première* was given in the Protestant church, for it was very large, and the Abbé himself took the baton. The princes, his old friends, the Wagners, his pupils, crowded the immense auditorium, all save Carolyne, who wrote from her Roman tomb: "*The Christ*, ah, that is the glorious peace of my heart! For me it is a work of which the ages have not seen the like. Its hour has not struck." That was true. And, moreover, it was badly executed, so that all its weaknesses were emphasized. But criticism no longer reached the composer, who thought especially of the edifying value of his work: "I have composed *The Christ* as He was taught me by the priest of my village." So long as it fortified in their faith a few simple hearts, was not his end attained?

This summer of 1873 Liszt returned to Bayreuth, which he formed the habit of visiting henceforth every year. The soil of his ideal. If Wagner was its Parsifal with the divine lance, Liszt was its old King Titurel, whose faith had dreamed this castle dedicated to the Holy Grail of music. He found in himself once more a soul flowing with joy within the walls that rose at the two extremities of the town, at Wahnfried (peace of the imagination, repose of the spirit), the beautiful dwelling, in the Roman style, of the Wagners, and above, on the sacred hill, at the foot of the temple. He admired also the double tomb which Richard and Cosima had already caused to be dug in the garden so that they should remain united, and he drew from it, in his customary way, a lesson in humility. It was in the habit of the third order of Saint Francis that he wished to be buried, without

pomp, without honours. The grander everything he had wished to be grand grew about him, the more he made himself small. "He must increase, but I must decrease." So he grew into the habit of singing inwardly at intervals some verse of the Old or the New Testament. And the demon was exorcised: the other ardours grew calm, or at least were purified.

He returned to Rome in the peace of his body to find a Carolyne more broken but more understanding: "Your soul is too tender," she said, "too artistic, too sentimental to exist without feminine society. You need to have women about you, and women of every kind, as an orchestra demands different instruments, varied tonalities. Unfortunately, there are few women who are what they should be: good and sincere, responding to your intelligence without placing a guilty hand on the chords which, if they reply, produce a melancholy sound. I am often very sad when I think how you will always be misunderstood. Perhaps in the future your triumphs will seem to have been bacchanals, for some bacchantes have mingled in them. And yet I know that you have never called them. So far as they have not made you leave your ideal sphere, you have found yourself happy there."

Happy! Childhood has more taste for this word than old age, which has less time to think of it. When the hour grows late, one makes haste. His vast career seemed to Liszt to be behind the schedule that he had planned. Henceforth, the glory of God must be sung by his servitor on all the roads of Europe, as in the old days. A three weeks' stay in Rome was enough. He set out again for Pest, where his admirers were gathered to celebrate his jubilee.

For it was actually fifty years since he had given his first concert at Vienna and Beethoven had embraced him. Just as at the time of his former triumph, Liszt was received at the frontier by a deputation, conducted in great pomp to the capital and fêted for three days with banquets and public rejoicings. The *Cantata* performed by the "Liszt Society," the presentation of a golden laurel crown, the founding of a Liszt Fund that would serve to pay for the instruction of three musical students during the whole year, a solemn production of *The Christ*, telegrams from the four corners of the earth, decorations, a ball. At his right and left were seated his two friends, one fair, the other dark, the Black Cat and the White Fairy. Liszt rose after the official speeches and, as his custom was, replied in French: "I thank God for having granted me a pious childhood. The same religious sentiments animate my compositions, from the *Gran Mass* to the work that you heard yesterday." And, shortly afterward, he wrote to the Princess: "Dear Saint Carolyne, believe me when I say that I am not pursuing ribbons, or productions of my works, or praise, or distinctions, or newspaper articles in whatever land I happen to be visiting. My sole ambition as a musician has been and will be to cast my javelin into the indefinite spaces of the future, as we said once in the journal of Brendel." And to complete the tour of his fiftieth musical anniversary, he went to play at Vienna, Presbourg, and even Œdenburg, that little town where Papa Liszt had been so proud of his mosquito of a son.

A sudden fatigue brought him back to the Villa d'Este, and, filled with ideas, he returned to composition. It was the first time in a long while that he had enjoyed with so much vigour the company of his books, his music

paper and the bells of the monastery. In a few months he wrote his *Legend of Saint Cecilia*, *The Bells of Strasbourg*, interrupting himself only on Sundays to go and see Carolyne. A period of double happiness for the recluse, who exulted in her power to add to her faith in God her faith in the genius of the beloved one. "People do not understand him yet—much less than they do Wagner—for the latter, at the present time, represents a reaction. But Liszt has thrown his lance much farther into the future. Several generations will pass before he is entirely understood. Since it has been given to me to understand him, I must, in the name of art, do everything to see that he gives everything that he can give." Such was the unvarying Credo this jealous, bothersome, sublime creature recited every day. But nothing annoys a man like a love of this kind. Franz suffered from it without ever allowing this suffering to be seen and sought consolation in his work. *Excelsior* is of this date, a work from which Wagner was to borrow a famous harmony in his *Parsifal.*

All this was written at Tivoli, the Villa d'Este. The *signor commendatore* occupied there a little apartment of four rooms opening on the hanging terraces from which the view stretched beyond the Roman campagna to the horizon of Saint Peter's. In the cardinal's gardens and among the cool alleys of the town, a multitude of children ran to kiss the hands and the cassock of the artist. Liszt flung about handfuls of money which his servant got ready every day for this purpose. He amused himself with this joyous poverty in the midst of which his Franciscan soul breathed at its ease. The playing fountains, the cascades, the cypresses in the park filled him with a light, gushing music. These were months full of serenity.

But a great sorrow befell him at the end of May, 1874, the death of his friend Marie de Moukhanov, who had been ill for a long time. In the last letter she had written him, she said: "To live in your memory is a mode of existence that gives one some peace." Perhaps this seeker of happiness had really loved no one but Liszt. He piously kept her letters, in which there was revealed a chaste tenderness they were both careful to guard from the exaggerations of passion. He reread one of them. It was impregnated with those exquisite sentiments which had drawn him to her so many years before: "I shall sum up in a single word of thanks many very old, very young, passionately admiring and always humble sentiments that one must cherish, combat and keep to oneself." He gave free course to his tears. Then he sat down at the piano, for this was always his first movement in moments of great grief as of great joy, and improvised his *Elegy in Memory of Mme. Marie Moukhanov, née Countess Nesselrode.*

In the following spring, he set out again for Pest, where an interesting concert, a Wagner-Liszt concert, was being given. The two composers mounted the platform together. Wagner conducted fragments of the *Ring*, the receipts being destined for the theatre of Bayreuth. His music was now that which everybody wanted to hear and no one disputed any more. When Liszt's turn came, he approached the piano, stooping, with an air of fatigue, to play a Concerto of Beethoven. At first he seemed scarcely to touch the keys, and people asked themselves if this great old man had not exhausted his illustrious powers. But the sound rose, expanded and soon filled the hall with such a plenitude of harmony, such a miraculous sweetness of expression, that, according

to the opinion of the most competent judges, the Liszt of thirty years earlier had not attained such a degree of perfection.

He then set out for Munich, Hanover, the Castle of Loo (where he was the guest of the King of Holland), to return at last to Weimar. He was possessed by one idea, that of organizing a solemn ceremony in memory of Marie de Moukhanov. The Grand Duke gladly lent himself to this, and Liszt took charge of everything. The date was fixed for June 17th, by way of signifying the "end of the year." In the hall of the Templar's House, on the edge of the Grand Ducal park, a catafalque of verdure was arranged, on the top of which, on a mountain of flowers, was placed the portrait of the White Fairy painted by Lenbach. A hundred and fifty guests were gathered there, among them the King and Queen of Würtemberg, the Queen of Holland, and Cosima Wagner, dressed in mourning. The Abbé Liszt served this musical mass, the ritual of which consisted of five parts, all of his own composition: his *Requiem*, for four men's voices, the *Hymn of the Child on His Awakening*, for three women's voices, the *Legend of Saint Cecilia*, and finally the *Elegy*. It all breathed the memory of this romantic pilgrim, the dazzling pupil of Chopin, the sister in the ideal of the great Abbé who, describing to a friend these spiritual obsequies, said: "There was in her an indescribable note of mystery the harmony of which resounded only in heaven."

Still another bereavement overtook him a year later, when he had just reached Pest. Running through the newspapers, his eye was caught by a well-known name, that of Daniel Stern. Marie d'Agoult, the mother of his children! She too was dead, Daniel Stern! Stupefied

at first, he looked into himself and found that he felt nothing. Ah, that pain had been worn out! When one has wept over a person in his lifetime, can one still weep after his death? "*Il mondo va da sè*—one exists in it, one keeps busy, one grieves, torments oneself, becomes disillusioned, thinks better of it, and dies as best one can! The most desirable of the sacraments to receive seems to me that of Extreme Unction." While he was thinking this, a letter was put into his hands from his son-in-law Ollivier. It contained, along with some political notes, only four lines on the event. But it enclosed a page from Ronchaud: "Mme. d'Agoult's illness was very brief and we did not realize the danger until the eve of her death. She fell ill on Tuesday afternoon, and on Sunday at noon everything was over. She died of an inflammation of the lungs which came on during a walk: she suffered a great deal the first days, but the last days were calmer. The funeral took place yesterday morning. The prayers were said after the Protestant rite, in the mortuary chapel, from which the coffin was carried to Père-Lachaise, where it lay in state in a provisional vault. Two discourses were pronounced, full of eloquent feeling, and deeply touching to those who were present, one at the house, the other at the cemetery, by the Pastor Fontanès, one of the eminent members of the liberal Protestant church chosen by Mme. d'Agoult herself."

A very few months after Marie it was George Sand's turn. With these old ladies Franz's whole youth was going. Who remained now from the time when they left Nohant in the post-chaise to visit Lamartine in the château of Saint-Point? He looked about him and found no one but himself, the indefatigable rover of the

great highways who still received every week the mail of a young man. But love letters are no consolation for old age, however much of a security they may be against ennui. Now and then, however, one of the young women who admired him stirred his enthusiasm sufficiently to offer him still a few moments of illusion.

This year 1876 was the year of Bayreuth, the year of the "great miracle of German art" of which for thirty years Liszt had been the prophet. The Festspielhaus was opening its doors for the first time to an audience of kings, disciples, and the curious who were flocking there from every corner of the globe. The old master Liszt set out at the head of the procession of pilgrims. He had scarcely reached the holy spot when he wrote to Carolyne: "No more doubt, no more obstacles. The immense genius of Wagner has surmounted everything. His work, the *Nibelungenring*, shines over the world. The blind cannot obstruct the light nor the deaf the music." And to the Grand Duke at Weimar: "What has been accomplished here is almost a miracle. Your Royal Highness will see it is so, and I shall always regret that Weimar, in the name of its glorious antecedents, has not had all the glory that will come from it."

The town was dressed in flags. The strange Ludwig II drove through it in a closed carriage and hastened to the theatre where, alone in his box, he watched the final rehearsals. The Emperor of Brazil was expected with his daughter and his son-in-law. The Emperor of Russia and his cousin of Mecklenburg were staying with the Duke of Würtemberg. The hotels were crammed with people; princes and kapellmeisters, strangers and musicians of all degrees of greatness, were quartered on the inhabitants. Seated beside the master, in his carriage, young

Professor Nietzsche, with his grave eye and his knitted brows, was disclosing Heaven knows what frightening thought. He had already written of his great friend that he was a simplifier of the world, without clearly suspecting as yet that a war of the spirit was going to separate them for ever. He was living the last hours of a dream which he was going to remember many years later and of which he was to say: "I loved Wagner—and, except for him, no one. He was a man after my heart."

On August 13, the curtain rose on the *Rheingold*; the three days following, on *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*. Wagner at last saw the realization of the ambition of his whole life in this æsthetic lesson which extended from the poem to the stage-setting, from the music to the philosophy. But he left it to his wife to enjoy the glory at her receptions at Wahnfried. As for himself, almost exhausted by the effort, he shut himself up in the company of the mad King and his old friend Liszt. In his private talks with them, the exile of Zurich, the man who had starved in Paris, felt that he had broken a despair that he had borne for forty years. One might say that he had paid for this triumphal dawn with the gift of his life. "Let not an older man think of himself," he exclaimed at this time, "but let him love the younger through the love of what he can bequeath him. . . ." This explains why his heritage is so charged with emotion. But Wagner was aware that he could not allow his bequest to be divided without paying the oldest of his debts. He waited to do this in public, at the banquet that followed the last performance.

Having risen to deliver his discourse before seven hundred guests, he ended with these words: "There is

the man who believed in me first of all, when no one as yet knew anything about me, the one without whom you might never have heard one note of my music, my very dear friend Franz Liszt."

XXVI

My Old Venus

ONE must always excuse an unskilful heart and make allowances for suffering. The indulgence of some will go to Liszt, that of others to the Princess. The fact is that Bayreuth resulted in a serious dispute between this pair of old lovers. One can guess what Carolyne's reproaches were. She was indignant that her great man should consent to play the rôle of a "supernumerary." Franz replied simply: "No one plays any rôle here. One creates art and enjoys it." And a little while after: "In all humility, I do not think I deserve the letter I received from you to-day. God knows that to lighten your sorrows was my sole task for many years. I have succeeded very badly, it seems. For my part, I only wish to remember the hours when we have wept and prayed together, with one heart. After your letter of to-day, I give up the idea of returning to Rome."

He kept his word. Rome did not see him that year. Absence, he thought, would cure him and, above all, cure the Princess, and he patiently awaited the day when their sad colloquies would cease. It was in good faith that he invoked his patron saint, Francis de Paul, that man of obscure origin who had founded the order of Minims. He fasted, mortified himself, never wrote out his sermons, and scarcely thought of literature. On the contrary, "your patron, Saint Charles Borromeo, of an illustrious family, was a cardinal very early and thus participated in the government of the Church. He even interested himself in music and patronized the reform

permitted at that time in the Sistine Chapel in favour of Palestrina. While fasting and mortifying himself, like Saint Francis de Paul, and taking *Humilitas* for his device, he remained Archbishop of Milan and *porporato*. Our two patrons explain very well our differences of opinion. You soar aloft and I paddle about below. I attach myself to the Minims, and you are in sympathy with the great, who must reign and govern. Why dispute? You must necessarily be right." This paraphrase of a celebrated passage from Pascal struck the unhappy woman to the heart. But an artist, tried beyond endurance, becomes ferocious.

Liszt made his expiation in other ways. For instance, in the case of Bülow's sudden dislike of him: Bülow, blasting what he had adored, was now repudiating the work of his old master and extolling that of Brahms. It was in circumstances of this kind that Liszt showed his greatness. He went to see Bülow who, utterly worn out by his excessive labours, had been obliged to take a long rest in a sanatorium on the banks of the Rhine. Liszt's only vengeance was to pardon him. "He suffers more morally than physically. His innate heroism remains and will render him victorious, I hope, over the double illness that crushes him." This was in a most beautiful Christian spirit, and one could not but subscribe to the judgment expressed by Liszt upon himself when he wrote at this same period: "It is twelve years since I entered the Vatican as an associate of Mgr. Hohenlohe. The sentiments that led me there have not deserted me; they date from my years of childhood and my first communion in a little village church. I dare to say that nothing factitious or vain has ever debased them, and I hope that the grace of God will preserve them to me

till my last hour. To give them a homogeneous, harmonious, complete form, in the practice of life and in that of my profession as an artist, has been and remains the chief desire of my heart."

Liszt returned to Rome, therefore, in the summer of 1877 and established himself once more at Tivoli. He passed whole days under the cypresses and composed the famous piece which he dedicated to them. Michael Angelo was his guide, but he wished to express himself here "by a quasi-amorous melody." *Ruysbroek the Admirable*, discovered thanks to Ernest Hello, was his book of inspiration: for a whole season he talked about it. This great childlike heart was filled with the sentiment of his own unworthiness, and from this time he preferred to sign his messages to Carolyne with the name of Dimas, which tradition attributed to the good thief. If he still travelled a good deal, if he wandered every year between Pest, Weimar, Bayreuth, and Paris, Rome had nevertheless become his haven of study and serenity. His pride was truly made up, as he said, of sincere modesty; and when they performed again his *Gran Mass* at Saint-Eustache and the receipts amounted to 150,000 francs, when Pasdeloup said to him, "Your *Credo*, Monsieur l'Abbé, is a sure success at popular concerts," it no longer even touched his vanity. His spirit had become so purely that of the gospel that he bore the cavillings of Carolyne as a necessary cross. What she suffered and caused him to suffer through jealousy was only that jealousy of God which Saint Paul speaks in his Epistle to the Corinthians. And yet she was sometimes insupportable. In a moment of revolt, Franz could not restrain himself from crying out: "You no longer take any account of the logical honour of my life. When I am dead, you will realize

that my soul was and always remained profoundly attached to yours." At Christmas, 1878, at the midnight mass, he prayed for her with all his heart and asked God to render him worthy of the "sense of the supernatural" in which he felt himself enveloped.

He composed his *Via Crucis* and his *Seven Sacraments*. His *Mephisto-waltz* also. He took a deep interest in the new Russian music of Rimski-Korsakov, Balakireff, Borodin, César Cui, and Anatole Liadov. At a time when the elegant society of Saint Petersburg scarcely knew the names of these gentlemen, Liszt, with that rare eye which he always possessed, had already discerned their importance. "The five musicians I have just named are ploughing a more fruitful furrow than the lingering imitators of Mendelssohn and Schumann." And feeling this time that actual old age was approaching as quickly as his seventieth birthday, he doubled his labour and his pious activity. Rising at four o'clock, he did not leave his table till seven, when he went to mass and then breakfasted and rested for a moment and took up his pen again till noon. After his siesta, he gave his lessons from four to six, took a hand at whist and dined every evening with the Princess in the Via del Babuino.

As for the latter, for twenty years she had held to the same schedule and her strange habits. Even Liszt was compelled to wait in the antechamber for ten minutes, like any mere caller, in order not to introduce into the air-tight room the least freshness from out-of-doors. Seated in the centre of her web, this laborious spider continued to spin page out of page while she smoked the cigars, of double strength and double length, which the excise-office made for her. She talked chiefly of

politics and theology. Hohenlohe came often, in his cardinal's equipage, and he plotted with his relative a surprise which he had in store for their old friend: the honorary canonry of Albano. Liszt was astonished when they informed him of this, but he admitted to himself that this handsome present from the Church gave him singular pleasure. It was not that he planned to draw any vanity from it, but after all it advanced him farther on that ecclesiastical road whose peaceful honours had constantly stirred his obedient soul. "The idea of outward advancement," he explained, "was as strange as possible to me. I was only following, in all simplicity and honesty of heart, the old Catholic tendency of my youth. If I had not been opposed in my first fervour by my dear good mother and my confessor, the Abbé Bardin, it would have led me to the seminary in 1830 and later into the priesthood. One reasons at random on the ideal. I know nothing loftier than that of the priest meditating, practising and teaching the three theological virtues, faith, hope, charity, voluntarily sacrificing his life, crowned with martyrdom when God grants it! Would I have been worthy of such a vocation? Divine grace alone could have made it possible. As it is, the loving tenderness of my mother and the prudence of the Abbé Bardin have left me in great danger from temptations which I have been able to resist very inadequately. Poetry, music and also some grain of native revolt, have too long subjugated me. *Miserere mei, Domine.*"

His installation as Canon of Albano took place on Sunday, October 12, 1879. Just two days before, he finished writing his *Second Waltz of Mephisto* and the *Saraband* on Handel's *Almire*. One might call these a last pledge to the evil one, the final admittance of that

native revolt of which he spoke without quite enough shame. But although he had full right now to the violet sash, he never wore it except in photographs. Truth to tell, he felt he was too old and his beauty had left him. Warts were appearing on his face. In the mirror, where for so long he had seen the great commanding eagle, now appeared an old, almost featureless vulture which he examined with melancholy. "The fatigue of age and some indescribable inner sadness, the fruit of a too long experience, increases and renders any appearance in public very painful to me." Which did not prevent him from running about a little wherever they were playing his music, at Vienna, at Baden, at Antwerp, in Holland. He appeared at the concerts as a spectator beside a new and very young friend, Lina Schmalhausen. This was a last flirtation, though quite honourable and respectable. But Liszt, as the Princess put it, needed feminine enthusiasm, feminine society, and existence would have seemed to him tasteless if he had not had within reach some beautiful living being from whom his heart could draw some final harmonies. Accompanied by this housekeeper, he established himself at Budapest, where they had prepared for him this time a comfortable apartment on the premises of the Conservatory itself. They had realized at last that the old gipsy needed consideration, care, and even surveillance. His mania of generosity went so far, in fact, that he gave away not only his superfluous money but even what was necessary for him. At Weimar, his unworthy pupils stole from him, took money from his bureau drawers. Bülow came expressly to put things in good order, and he expelled these Judases from the cohort of disciples. As for Franz's celebrated health, it was breaking up also.

He suffered from a serious swelling of the feet which the doctor diagnosed as the beginning of dropsy. But it was impossible to make him follow a regimen and deprive himself of his cognac. He had had the habit for too long. For this overworked man, who had been travelling for fifty years, sought and found in this the necessary stimulus.

In the month of July, 1881, at Weimar, he had a fall on his staircase from which he recovered with difficulty. Bülow and his daughter Daniela came to take care of him. The cordial and admiring relations between the two men were resumed as before. No one could resist loving Liszt. If Bülow had suffered from an "excess of brains, intelligence, study, work, travel, and fatigue," as his ex-father-in-law said, he was now, with the latter and Wagner, one of the foremost musicians in Germany. The old trio of the musicians of the future had brilliantly justified the ambitious name which they had chosen.

One day, Alexander Borodin, passing through Weimar, timidly approached the famous little house in the grand-ducal park and had himself announced. He had scarcely handed in his card when a long figure dashed out, with a long nose, a long black frock-coat, and long white hair.

"You have written a beautiful symphony," rumbled a sonorous voice in excellent French. "You are very welcome, I am delighted to see you. Only two days ago I played your symphony to the Grand Duke, who was charmed by it. Your *andante* is a masterpiece. The *scherzo* is ravishing. . . . And then this passage is ingenious."

And the long fingers of iron began to plunder the piano, to use Mussorgsky's expression. The old man played without ceasing to talk and overwhelmed the

Russian with questions. The other replied, apologized for his inexperience (he had been a doctor), observed that he modulated to excess.

"Heaven keep you from touching your symphony," Liszt protested. "Your modulations are neither exaggerated nor incorrect. You have, in fact, gone very far, and that is precisely your merit. Do not listen to people who wish to hold you back; believe me, you are on the right road. Your artistic instinct is such that you should not be afraid of being original. Remember that the same advice was given in their time to Beethoven, Mozart, etc. If they had followed it, they would never have become masters. You know Germany; much is being written there. I am drowning in an ocean of music that submerges me. But God, how empty it is! Not one living idea. In your country a vivifying current prevails. Sooner or later (later probably) this current will break out a new path here."

He scolded him for not publishing his scores and complimented him for not having studied at any conservatory.

"That is just like myself, though I am directing one! But even if your works are neither performed nor published, even if they meet with no success, believe me, they will still clear an honourable path for themselves. You have an original talent; listen to no one, and work in your own way."

Borodin noted that Liszt spoke very fluently in both French and German, but that one would take him at first for a Frenchman. He did not sit down for an instant, but walked about gesticulating; there was no suggestion of the ecclesiastic about him. The following

day he saw him again at the rehearsal of a concert which Liszt was giving that evening in the cathedral of Jena. The latter arrived in his cassock, with the Baroness von Meyendorff on his arm and followed by the usual procession of his pupils of both sexes. He paid particular attention to a new "indispensable," Mlle. Vera Timanova, which made all the others blush with anger. "When Liszt's turn came," Borodin wrote to his wife, "he made his way to the end of the choir, and soon his grey head appeared behind the instrument. The rich, powerful sounds of the piano rolled like waves under the Gothic vaults of the temple. It was divine. What sonority, what power, what plenitude! What a *pianissimo* and what a *morendo*! We were transported. When the *Funeral March* of Chopin came, it was evident that this piece had not been arranged. Liszt improvised on the piano, while the organ and the violoncello played the written parts. Every time the theme returned, it was something different, but it is difficult to conceive what he was able to do with it. The organ drew out *pianissimo* the harmonies in thirds of the bass. The piano, with the pedal, gave the full harmonies *pianissimo*. The violoncello sang the theme. It was like the far-away sound of funeral bells that still sound when the preceding vibration has not yet died away. Nowhere have I ever heard anything like it."

Before the concert, Borodin was invited to dine with Liszt, Baroness von Meyendorff, and the favourites. Then they all went together to the cathedral where "my old Venus," as Borodin called him, played the *Funeral March* in a totally different way. He improvised again. "That is the way he always deceives you," said the pretty Timanova. "He's an odd original."

Borodin returned to Weimar. He was present at the lessons, at meals, at evening parties at the Grand Duke's or the Baroness's. He heard the admirable little Vera play a rhapsody of the master and saw the latter embrace her by way of a compliment, while the young woman kissed his hand. This was the established usage. And as Liszt liked to hasten his friendships, he played in duet with Borodin the recent compositions of that artist. When the latter suppressed something, "Why," cried Liszt, "do you not play that? It is so beautiful. Your modulations are models. There is nothing like them in Beethoven or in Bach, and in spite of its novelty the work is above reproach." As the Baroness insisted that the Russian should sing, he made them listen to a chorus from *Prince Igor*. Borodin had fallen in love with his old Venus. Unknown persons bowed to him in the streets of Weimar because they had seen him on the arm of Liszt. "So you see, my little dove, how your very faithful husband has been touched by grace."

Liszt, however, had not properly recovered from his fall. He had violent attacks of nausea which worried his friends, but this did not prevent him from working passionately at the *Canticle of the Sun* of Saint Francis of Assisi. Was it not logical that after all the painted Saint Francises that decorated the churches there should also be a musical one? He composed also a last symphonic poem, *From the Cradle to the Grave*, then went for his convalescence to his daughter's at Bayreuth. Wagner was finishing there the composition of his *Parsifal*. Still a hundred pages to write. "It needs nothing more," wrote Liszt, "but care, genius and his tormenting labour." We are at the end of September, 1881. The

following month, Liszt celebrated the seventieth anniversary of his birth. But the old man could no longer travel alone, and for the first time his granddaughter Daniela accompanied him to Rome, where they alighted together at the Hôtel Alibert. A general fatigue overwhelmed him. He slept a little everywhere, in company as at his work-table. He was unwilling to admit this, however, and replied that he always felt very well. But he had to have a very high temperature in his bedroom, for he shivered incessantly. For his birthday, his friends arranged a little musical ceremony at the Caffarelli Palace. On the morning of that day he received a letter from Carolyne: "Dear, dear good soul, may your seventieth anniversary begin under the auspices of the sun that brightened the 22nd of October at Woronince. Let us thirst for eternity. It is for eternity that I have desired to possess you in God and to give you to God. A good year and many good years, dear great man. You have great things to do. And may God who gives us the means of doing them give you also the recompense here below and above. While awaiting the complete recompense, let us rejoice in the little partial payments. . . . Good-bye for the present. Saint Francis has worked so many miracles. He will work one for you who cover him with glory. Secular glory."

The weather being very beautiful, they went out for a drive to the Villa Doria-Pamphili, the largest in Rome, strewn with fountains and statues. Liszt sat on the ground and took the newspaper out of his pocket while the others went on with their drive. On returning, they found him asleep, his hair blowing in the light wind. A lamb was brushing against him. Horses and sheep were grazing all around.

In the spring of 1882, he received the piano score of *Parsifal* with this dedication: "O friend! My Franz, first and only one, receive this expression of thanks from your Richard Wagner." This year the first presentation was to take place. At the end of January he set out to fulfil his double duty at Weimar and Budapest, in spite of an extreme fatigue. But the great event at Bayreuth gave him strength and enthusiasm. "My point of view remains fixed: absolute admiration, excessive, if you wish. The *Parsifal* is more than a masterpiece—it is a revelation in the musical drama. It has been justly said that after the Song of Songs of the terrestrial love in *Tristan und Isolde*, Wagner has gloriously traced in *Parsifal* the supreme song of divine love."

A few days later he married his granddaughter Blandine (Blandine II, as she was called) to a Sicilian, the Count di Gravina, and he gave her a modest grandfatherly gift. How absurd for this man who had squandered fortunes everywhere! But he was poor now, a fact that gave him a Tolstoyan joy. For the rest, he did not know how to save. When, one day, someone stole his beautiful fur mantle which hung in his vestibule, he rejoiced. He had never had the sense of property.

In the late autumn he set out for Venice to join the Wagners, who had come there to spend the winter. He carried in his baggage the first twenty volumes of the *Causes* of Princess Carolyne, which she had just sent to him. "Truly," he wrote to her, "you derive from Saint Augustine, Saint Bernard, Saint Thomas, Saint Theresa, Saint Catherine of Siena—and a little from Joseph de Maistre too; for—if it will not displease you—you share with him the militant and prophetic sense." And a little later: "In truth, I have no understanding of poli-

tics and theology; consequently, three-quarters of your labour is beyond my grasp. As for æsthetics, I confess also that I have not yet found the Ariadne's thread that would draw me through the labyrinth of the many systems of the ancient and modern philosophers. Let us hope that I may at last seize the true thread in the theory you elucidate of the emotions and sensations. Between the two I see myself condemned to a sceptical disappointment." No doubt Liszt was right in thinking that for people to understand one another well it is necessary not to explain too much.

The Wagners were settled in the Vendramin Palace on the Grand Canal. The apartment reserved for Liszt was on the *entresol*. It consisted of three rooms, with an antechamber and a charming drawing-room, the windows of which opened on the canal. The parish church was only a hundred steps away. The old man went there to hear mass every morning, according to his custom. Wagner received no visits; his life was entirely spent with his family and intimate friends. Cosima admirably regulated the whole *andamento* of the house: the chambermaids, the cook and footman brought from Bayreuth, besides two permanently employed gondoliers. In the morning he remained at home. At two o'clock they dined. Then Liszt worked at the *Saint Stanislas*. Sometimes, to refresh himself, he sat down at the piano. Then Wagner arrived, locked the door, seated himself beside the instrument, and the two old comrades plunged into their favourite music, that of Beethoven and Bach. In the evening, before supper, Liszt played a little more, after which they sat at whist till the cards fell from the grandfather's hands.

Saint Stanislas advanced quickly. He interrupted it

suddenly to write the elegy, *The Funeral Gondola*, not knowing through what strange presentiment.

Then he left Venice and went back to Pest. On February 14, in the morning, his friend Abranyi entered his bedroom and said to him: "My dear master, no doubt you have already heard the news? Wagner is dead." Liszt, who was at his work-table, made no movement and continued to write. After a very long time he replied, without turning his head: "And why not?" There was another silence. Liszt broke it. "I too," he said, "have been buried many times." Other persons dropped in at this moment, confirming the news. Then telegrams poured in. At last came this one from Daniela: "Mother begs you not to come. Remain quietly at Pest. We are taking the body to Bayreuth, after a brief stop at Munich." Having read it, Liszt said, with the utmost calm: "He to-day, I to-morrow." Then he resumed his letter to Carolyne: "You know my sad feeling about life: to die seems to me simpler than to live. Death, even preceded by the long and frightful sufferings of 'the dying,' to use the striking phrase of Montaigne, is our deliverance from an involuntary yoke, the consequence of original sin. Job is my patron in the Old Testament, and the good thief Saint Dimas in the New."

XXVII

The Angelico of the Villa d'Este

"IS Liszt working at the *Saint Stanislas*? Is he taking care of his health?" asked the Princess in her letters to the friends at Weimar. Well, no, he was entirely neglecting the dropsy that was invading him and thinking of nothing but the preparation of a musical commemoration for the anniversary of Wagner. Since his return to Weimar, he had immediately become absorbed in this, and on May 22 this solemn festival took place under his inspiration. They played seven or eight of the master's works. Liszt in person directed the *Enchantment of Good Friday* and a piece he had just finished for the occasion, *On the Tomb of Richard Wagner*.

Then he set to work composing again and took out from his drawer the *Requiem*, written in former days in the monastery of Santa Francesca Romana beside the Forum. He rehandled it, endeavouring to give to the sense of death a character of Christian hope. The warm light of Rome, which he called up from the marble ruins and the cypresses of the Palatine, shone in the strophe of the *recordare*. The old man tried to introduce into it a sense of the easiness of "dying well," the recompense of those with whom faith in beauty and enthusiasm for God are mingled in one single commandment.

He spent this whole year at Weimar and at Pest. In the spring of 1884, the *Stanislas* was sufficiently advanced for him to conduct fragments of it in public. The people of Weimar found the composer old and tired; but he carried himself like a young man when he mounted

to the desk. Like the great Arnauld, Liszt said: "Have we not eternity in which to rest?" At Bayreuth he was present at *Parsifal*, but he did not even see his daughter, who shut herself up in her mourning for eighteen months, without making any exception, even in favour of her father. Then he returned to Hungary and made a visit to the estate of his friend, Count Zichy. The peasants arranged an ovation for him. Several hundred young girls flung flowers at him, as in the glorious days when he scattered love from city to city. And because he was charmed with the spontaneous caresses of *his* people, he gave a free concert. After the last piece, an old peasant made himself the interpreter of the crowd and addressed these words to the great man: "Your name the Count has told us. What you are able to do you have shown us. But what you are we have learned ourselves. May the powerful God of the Hungarians bless you."

Returning to Rome towards the end of autumn, he passed a few weeks there only to set out on the road again at the beginning of the year 1885. A sudden hunger for travelling had seized him anew, as if he wished to survey for the last time the cities where he had loved and struggled: Florence, Vienna, Antwerp, Strasbourg, Aix-la-Chapelle, Munich, Leipzig, Presbourg, Carlsruhe, not to mention Weimar and Budapest. In spite of his increasing fatigue, he dragged himself from gala to gala, wrote music on the corners of hotel tables, dined with prelates and princes, played whist, gave lessons, granted sittings to celebrated portrait painters, suffered in his eyes and his nerves. "I waste my time more or less deliberately. Owing to the weakness of age, work has become more difficult for me. Nevertheless, I continue laboriously to fill my music-paper."

He returned to Rome worn out, and when he came to balance his accounts he found that for all his pains the year had yielded him little. In the first days of 1886 took place at Rome the first Liszt concert, and the old master played there in public for the last time. Then he arranged for what he called his "supreme grand tour." On the eve of his departure, he climbed the staircase in the Via del Babuino to bid farewell to Carolyne. The two old people kissed each other on the forehead. For several years they had felt, at each of these separations, that it might well be the last. But they did not admit this to each other.

"My weariness of life is extreme," said Liszt, "and in spite of my willingness I no longer feel that I am good for anything."

She tried to give him confidence, she for whom time no longer flowed. Liszt shook his head, without conviction, but without sadness. He had been so long preparing for the journey from which there is no return that he was ready to mount the heavenly chariot whenever God wished.

In the meanwhile, he must see again the towns, the concert halls, the friends and the old scenes of his happiness. At Florence, through which he passed first, he remembered a certain Poniatowsky ball at which, leaving the dancers, he had gone out into the Tuscan night to take before the Perseus of Cellini an oath that he would go forth and conquer in the struggle between good and evil. That was forty-eight years ago. At Venice the old man warmed himself on the Riva degli Schiavoni at the precise spot where, at the time of his first visit with Marie, he planned to write his *Life of a Musician, a Long Dissonance without a Final Resolution.* He was off again to Vienna, just long enough to salute Magnolette,

and then set out for Liège. A great Liszt concert, triumph, flowers. In Paris he alighted at the Hôtel de Calais, where a mail was awaiting him, which he read with the rapture of the old days. "My master, Ossiana is yours every moment of her existence. She loves you better than all the other inhabitants of Paris, the most ardent included. Come, you can easily understand that I am beside myself and that I am barely able to write these lines which fill me with horror, but are nothing but the truth." He opened another. "My husband is mad over the army. This month he is going to receive a title. He will not wish for some time to return to his family. He is going to Dalmatia again, and into Herzegovina. I have also sent my son to Kalocsa, so that he may receive a sound education. I am absolutely free to do what seems good to me. Well, Monsignor, I ask you frankly and without ceremony: Will you have me as your *dame de compagnie* during your journey to London?" Ah, what an interesting adventure life is when one receives ten letters of this kind every morning! It is not only popes who have no age, as he had written yesterday to Carolyne.

On March 25, they gave the *Gran Mass* at Saint-Eustache, and because of the unprecedented success of the work it was given again on April 2. A beautiful revenge for the year 1866 and the criticisms of the bitter Berlioz. And as this was the actual feast day of Saint Francis of Paula, the old Liszt remembered the young Franz and the illness that had befallen him when he was obliged to separate from Mlle. de Saint-Cricq. He hastened to the church and humbled himself before the patron saint of the Minims.

London. A magnificent performance of the *Elizabeth* at Saint James's Hall. A call upon the Prince of Wales.

An audience with the Queen. Luncheon with the Duchess of Cambridge, whom he had known in 1840, in the days of the late Countess of Blessington, who had thought him as beautiful as one of those marbles which Lord Elgin carried away from the Parthenon. The Duchess was now eighty years old. As she was deaf, Liszt used the pedal a great deal in playing a little piece to her, and the two old people then perceived, laughing, that they were both in tears.

Antwerp. Liszt performed his duties as an Abbé during Holy Week; then he returned to Paris. On May 8, before seven thousand persons, Colonne directed the *Elizabeth* in the hall of the Trocadero. And Gounod, who was sitting beside the master, gave him the compliment that he appreciated most: "It is built of holy stones." The painter Munkácsy, his Hungarian compatriot, finished a portrait of him, after which Liszt settled down once more in his little cell at Weimar. Frau Wagner came and paid him a visit and brought him the news of the betrothal of her daughter Daniela to young Professor Thode. Liszt promised to be present at the marriage, which was to take place at Bayreuth at the beginning of July. And a few days later, the fiancé gave him a true pleasure by coming to see him and reading to him part of his work on Saint Francis of Assisi.

In spite of a sudden feeling of weakness, Liszt arrived on the appointed day at Bayreuth and was present at his granddaughter's wedding. Then, to keep another promise, he went to visit Munkâcsy at Colpach in Luxembourg. They thought him much broken there. In spite of an extreme fatigue and a bad cold, he wrote many letters. The last was addressed to his friend Agnes, the clever pupil of the Karlplatz in Weimar,

for whom he had preserved an unblemished affection for thirty years. "With you there is no *brodo lungo* to fear. You understand and say things in an admirable rhythm." Why had he not found this rhythm everywhere? But it necessitated a freedom unknown to love.

On July 20, in the evening, he took the train for Bayreuth again. He felt more ill. His bronchial tubes were affected. A gay little pair, no doubt on their wedding journey, burst into his compartment. The lovers embraced each other before the open window, which they refused to shut, in spite of this old fellow's timid request. Liszt was unable to insist. He sank back into his corner and fell asleep, and the young people smiled as they watched this ecclesiastic with the formidable face murmuring his prayers.

Arriving at Bayreuth, he took lodgings as usual in a house adjoining Wahnfried, where he occupied a bedroom on the ground floor. He immediately went to bed with a high fever. Nevertheless, in the evening, he made an effort to get up to go and see his daughter, for the Wagner performances were beginning and Cosima had resumed her receptions. The next day he felt so ill that he did not leave his bedroom. Some people came to see him in the evening. He played a game of whist with his faithful friends, but it was only with difficulty that he was able to hold the cards. On Saturday, the 24th, he received several pupils and went again to Wahnfried. On Sunday they gave *Tristan*, and, against the advice of the doctor, he had himself taken to the theatre, where, in Wagner's box, he held out till the death of Isolde.

On the following day he was more gravely ill. He was deprived of the cognac to which he had been so long

accustomed and he lost his strength more and more quickly. On Tuesday, July 27th, a doctor called in consultation diagnosed a congestion of the lungs and prescribed a complete rest. After this his door was shut, except to his daughter, who had a bed set up in the antechamber. On Friday he was delirious, trembled in all his limbs, started out of his sleep to fall again into delirium. He asked his servant: "It is Thursday to-day, isn't it?" "No, Friday." This greatly struck him, for he had the Italian superstition about this day. He had remarked that the year 1886 began with a Friday and that his birthday fell on a Friday also. His daughter asked him if he wished to see anyone, no doubt thinking of a priest. He replied, with decision: "Nobody." Did he need anything? "Nothing." Towards two o'clock in the morning, on Saturday the 31st, after an agitated sleep, this great unconscious body rose straight up in bed uttering fearful cries. And his strength was so great that he overthrew his servant, who tried to make him lie down again. Then he sank down motionless. The doctor made an injection in the region of the heart. Towards ten o'clock he moved his lips a little. They leaned over to listen. He said: "Tristan." This was his last word. At midnight he was dead.

Bayreuth, nevertheless, was dressed in flags and banners. The Crown Prince had arrived. They were about to present at the theatre the drama of which I have just written the name. Nothing was to be changed in the programme of the festival. Liszt, as a matter of fact, would not have tolerated it. There was nothing to do but to place him on the bier and carry him over to Wahnfreid. A small basket was enough to contain the poor possessions of the Franciscan: his cassock, a little linen,

and seven pocket-handkerchiefs. This was his whole heritage. We know how he had disposed of the rest.

What does the funeral ceremony matter? No doubt it was what it should have been: speeches, no music. The body was buried in the cemetery of Bayreuth, though it might well have been claimed by Weimar and Budapest. I do not think it was dressed in the habit of the Third Order, as Liszt had wished. About thirteen years before he had also written: "If possible, let them take me to my last home in the evening; two or three men paid for this will be enough to carry me. I do not wish to trouble others to follow me to the cemetery, when I can no longer serve them in any way."

To serve was the password of this destiny. To this must be added: to love.

May this story enlighten me and enlighten others in regard to the meaning of this word, which is so encumbered with banalities and obligations.

*
* *

When Princess Carolyne heard the news, she took to her bed, refused to receive anybody, and did not reply to any letters. All winter she remained in bed without granting herself any respite in her work. At the end of February, 1887, she signed the last page of her immense work. A fortnight later, her daughter and Cardinal Hohenlohe, coming to see her one evening, found her dead in her bed. She had kept the promise she had made herself: "If I cannot see him any more, I shall send my angels to him."

*
* *

At the moment of closing this story I was anxious to make

a pilgrimage to Tivoli. Some charming Italian friends carried me in an automobile over a dry, flat plain. At the foot of the Tiburtine mountains rose that fortress, flanked by the villa built in the sixteenth century by Cardinal d'Este. Nature, aided by a masterly fancy, has triumphed here over the architects of Rome. From terraces that drop in cascades among the waterfalls one looks out over the alley of the famous cypresses. This cathedral of verdure must have exalted the soul of Liszt, and one cannot make the tour of the hanging gardens without evoking the tall, thin abbé who walked there, with his hands behind his back. When the Cardinal d'Este built this palace, he unconsciously destined it to become a pleasant ruin, where a musician was to live his humble life. Prince Hohenlohe spent very little time there. His great apartment was usually closed. The watch-light that people saw at night burned in Liszt's quarters, four little rooms on the floor above.

A guard leads us up under the roof where two old women, who occupy these rooms now, receive us with a kind of distrust. But the door opens when they have learned the reason of our visit. More than forty years ago, these good souls were the servants of Liszt. Nothing more is necessary to produce on both sides a lively current of sympathy. They show us his bed, his work-room, the table under the open gallery where he took his meals, a signed photograph placed beside the image of the Holy Virgin. They reply to my questions: "Well, he was always dressed as an abbé, in a long, closed frock-coat, with one button, and a bomba *hat. He was generous, he always had his purse in his hand. And he embraced us—we were young,* petites, *you know. He liked embracing very much. How many ladies came here to see him! The most beautiful ones. One of them sent the master camellias every day. He worked and played all day. At five o'clock in the morning he took his lamp and went to mass. In Christmas week, when the* pifferari

came down from the mountains with their flocks, playing their bagpipes, he made them climb up here, feasted them and collected their melodies on his piano."

At this moment the monastery bells began to peal. I remembered the Excelsior, *composed while he was listening to them, from which Wagner declared he had borrowed the* motif *of the bells in* Parsifal. *The ancient carillon of San Francesco di Tivoli was thus the source of the mystic supper of Montsalvat. This association is not surprising. One must seat oneself before the threshold of this dwelling of the man of poverty, under the roof of the palace, and turn towards the narrow stone terrace that extends out into space. The old artist strode up and down it every day for hours.*

Watch him coming and going, this tall figure cut against the sky, for the platform drops off sheer on every side. The mere name of Liszt was at that time, in Europe, synonymous with passion. There was something supernatural about his whole personality. Even the countryfolk dwelling in Tivoli, who followed him to kiss his hands or touch his gown, felt this. The ill-disposed called it Satanism. Still others treated him as an adventurer. But we who have looked into him more deeply know that the passions of this strong temperament had never spoiled the limpidity of his heart. The humble acolyte had preserved all his life a happy faith.

Fra Beato died in the city of the popes and his remains are buried under a flagstone in Santa Maria sopra Minerva. But one seeks him in spirit in a cloister in Florence. It is just the same with the Angelico of music: his tombstone may lie under the rains of Bavaria, but it is from the Villa d'Este, from its highest terrace, that one must watch the soul of the musician taking wing towards heaven.

PARIS—ETOY—ROME, 1925.

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